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THE

HISTORY OF YUCATAN

FROM ITS DISCOVERY

TO THE

CLOSE OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

By CHARLES ST. JOHN FANCOURT, Esq.,

RECENTLY H.M. SUPERINTENDENT OF THE BRITISH SETTLEMENTS
IN THE BAY OF HONDURAS.

30056 ac

With a Map.

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TO THE

MERCHANTS AND MAHOGANY CUTTERS

OF THE

BRITISH SETTLEMENTS IN THE BAY OF HONDURAS,

This Work,

CONTAINING THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE

PENINSULA WHICH THEY INHABIT,

IS DEDICATED,

BY THEIR FAITHFUL FRIEND AND SERVANT,

C. St. JOHN FANCOURT.

PREFACE.

For some time previous to his departure from that tract of the American Continent, the government of which he had administered during a period of eight years, the Author of the following historical sketch had determined on writing, principally for the satisfaction of the Settlers, an account of the origin, the rise, and the development of one of the most remarkable possessions of the British Crown. It did not however occur to him then, that it would be necessary for the completion of his design to trace the connection of European enterprise with Central America to an earlier period than 1662, when the British logwood-cutters first commenced their operations on the coast of Yucatan. On the journey however of the Author to England, he became acquainted at New York with a gentleman* whose know-

* Hon. E. G. Squier, United States Chargé d'Affaires to the Republic of Nicaragua.

ledge of American history induced him to consider the advantage of extending his plan; and, at his suggestion, and by the advice of another*, to whose information and kindness he has been much indebted, he was led to consult the earliest and most authentic sources of information as regards the discovery of Yucatan, and the first, but abortive, pacification of the whole of that region in which the settlement now called British Honduras is situated. The result has been the preliminary volume which is now submitted to the Public, and which, perhaps, may claim the merit of being a faithful record in English of transactions at present only to be found in Spanish authors, the majority of whose works are very scarce, many of them existing only in national libraries, or, if in private collections, almost impossible of access.

With as little delay as possible, the Author will lay before the Public an additional volume, which will comprise the History of Yucatan, from the period when the British logwood-cutters commenced their operations at Cape Catoche, to the close of the administration in British Honduras of his immediate predecessor Major-General Alexander Macdonald.

* Henry Stevens, Esq., of Vermont.

These preliminary remarks cannot be concluded without recording the obligations of the Author to his old friend and schoolfellow, Dudley Costello, Esq., to whose skill he is indebted, not alone for the map which illustrates these pages, but for much valuable assistance and counsel during the progress of the work.

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HISTORY

OF

YUCÀTAN.

CHAPTER I.

COLUMBUS AT BONACCA.—DISCOVERY OF YUCATAN BY DE SOLIS AND PINZON.—EXPEDITION OF FRANCISCO HERNANDEZ DE CORDOVA.—LANDING AT CAPE CATOCHE.—CIVILIZATION OF THE INHABITANTS.—PEACEABLE INTERCOURSE WITH THE INDIANS AT CAMPEACHY.—AFFRAY AT CHAMPOTON.—EXPEDITION OF GRIJALVA.—POSSESSION TAKEN OF COZUMEL.—GRIJALVA'S VOYAGE ROUND THE COAST.—THE EVIL SKIRMISH.—DISCOVERY OF THE BOCA DE TERMINOS.—GRIJALVA AT THE RIVER TABASCO.—PROSECUTION OF THE VOYAGE TO PANUCO.—RETURN OF GRIJALVA TO CUBA.

THE history of the Peninsula of Yucatan, on the eastern coast of which the settlements of British Honduras have been established, belongs to the earliest period of western maritime discovery, and is the first and most prominent object to engage the attention of the writer who seeks to give a full and clear account of the nature of those settlements, and the manner in which they were formed.

It would seem to be a general law, that all discovery, whatever its nature, shall be progressive. The originator of a new idea arrives at a certain point, and stops there,

on the very threshold, perhaps, of attaining the reward for which he had long struggled; or, owing to some particular bias, is led from the goal, instead of towards it, when it is almost within reach, while those who follow, profiting by experience, with comparative ease achieve the victory and reap the fame.

There is no more remarkable illustration of this truth, than the failure of Columbus to reach the golden shore which was the vision of his whole existence. Impressed with a belief that a passage was to be found which should lead him into the great Indian Ocean, he steered in the contrary direction to that in which lay, not the channel he was in search of, but the land where more than Indian wealth abounded.

It was on the 27th of July, in the year 1502, on his fourth and last voyage, that Columbus took his departure from the southern coast of Cuba, and, sailing in a south-westerly direction, arrived on the evening of the third day at the island of Guanaja, now called Bonacca, the easternmost of the group of which Ruatan is the principal, and ten leagues distant from the mainland of America. From this island, which offered nothing to detain him, he could descry, to the south, a high range of mountains, beyond which he trusted to find the long-desired region of Cathay, and, turning his face from the track which, if pursued, would have made him the discoverer of Yucatan and Mexico, he bent his course to the continent where disappointment alone awaited him.

It forms no part of the present plan to follow the route taken by the great Genoese, further than to indicate certain places at which he touched on the Mosquito shore, an account of the occupation of that coast being a part of the task which it is proposed to accomplish in

this work. The northern side of Honduras occupied him first, from the cape which now bears that name, but called by Columbus "Punta de Caxinas," to Cape Gracias á Dios, the northern extremity of the province. His progress was slow, and nearly a month was consumed in it, contrary winds compelling him to tack along the whole length of the coast, where he landed but once, to take possession of the Rio Tinto, or Black River, to which Columbus gave the name of "Rio de la Posesion." From Cape Gracias á Dios he ran due south along the Mosquito shore, called "Cariay," touched at the present harbours of Bluefields and San Juan de Nicaragua, and then pushing on through the Boca del Toro, to the coast of "Cerabaro" (changed by Columbus to "Zerabora"), on the 7th of October reached the Bay of "Aburema," now the Laguna de Chiriqui[1]. For six months he lingered on the northern coasts of Veragua and Panama, and then, with his great mission unaccomplished, slowly and reluctantly returned to Cuba on his way back to Spain.

Three years afterwards, in 1506, two of the companions of Columbus, Juan Diaz de Solis and Vicente Yanez Pinzon, who commanded a ship in the Admiral's first voyage, were again in the Gulf of Honduras, and, proceeding from the Guanajos, examined the gulf till they reached the entrance of the Bay of Dulce, hoping to find some channel of communication with the Pacific Ocean. Herrera, whose account of this matter appears to be the most probable, says that De Solis and Pinzon, after sailing as far as the Guanajos, "held on to the

[1] Coleccion de los Viages y Descubrimientos que hiciéron por mar los Españoles desde fines del siglo xv., etc., etc. Coordinada é ilustrada por Don Martin Fernandez de Navarrete. Tom. i. pp. 283–4. (Madrid, 1825.)

westward as far as *Golfo Dolce*, but saw it not because it was hid, though they observed the inlet the sea makes between the land that forms that bay, and the land of Yucatan, from whence they descried the mountains of *Caria*, turned away to the northward, and discovered a great part of the kingdom of Yucatan[1]." They did not however explore the coast, nor was any landing made by the Spaniards till some years afterwards.

To De Solis and Pinzon must therefore be awarded the honour of being the discoverers of Yucatan, though nothing immediately resulted from their enterprise. To pursue a course yet further south was the route by which the Spanish adventurers hoped to light upon the supposed inlet to the Pacific, and with this view the expeditions of De Solis and Pinzon in 1508, of Lope Hurtado de Mendoza in 1514, and of De Solis again in 1515, were undertaken[2]. Fresh acquisitions of territory were the consequences of these voyages, by the last of which the province of the Rio de la Plata was given to the Crown of Spain; but "the Indies," as Mexico and the adjacent countries were afterwards magniloquently termed, still remained unknown. It is true that an expedition sailed from the island of Porto Rico in 1512, which took a north-westerly direction; but Juan Ponce de Leon, who commanded it, though he succeeded in discovering the island of Florida, doubled the Cape of Cañaveral on the eastern coast of that peninsula, and, returning southward, gave the name of "Los Martires" to the chain of islets near Cape Florida, and hazarded a few days' sail to the westward of it[3], can never be consi-

[1] Herrera: General History of America, translated by Captain S. Stevens: vol. i. p. 315. (London, 1741.)

[2] Coleccion de Navarrete, tom. iii. pp. 47–8–9.

[3] Ibid., tom. iii. p. 52.

dered as having fairly entered the great Gulf of Mexico. This achievement was reserved for Francisco Hernandez de Cordova, though it was more the effect of accident than design.

The island of Cuba was, in 1517, under the government of Diego Velasquez, and at the commencement of that year it was resolved that a voyage of discovery should be made, the primary object of which, says Gomara, was reported to be to obtain slaves from the Guanajos for the mines and other works in Cuba, "because they had no more native Indians, it being forbidden to make the Indians labour in their mines[1]." The expedition, consisting of two ships and a brigantine, was fitted out at the private expense of Francisco de Cordova, Cristoval Morant, and Lopez Ocioa de Caizedo, and sailed on the 8th of February, 1517,—according to Gomara, from the port of Santiago de Cuba, but by Navarrete's account, from the Havana. The latter says that, after doubling Cape Sant' Antonio, Cordova steered to the southward, was caught in a violent tempest, which lasted two days, and the weather then clearing, at the end of twenty-one days' sail saw unknown land at a point called "Las Mugeres[2]," the island which bears that name. The narrative of Gomara, which is more ample, but omits all mention of the storm, is as follows.

"Of these vessels Hernandez was captain; a hundred and ten men accompanied him; his pilot was Alaminos de Palos de Muguer, and the King's comptroller, Bernardin Iniguez de la Calzada. It is further related that he took with him a barque belonging to the Governor,

[1] Gomara: La Historia de las Indias, cap. lii. (Çaragoça, 1554.)

[2] Coleccion de Viages, etc., tom. iii. p. 53.

Diego Velasquez, in which he carried his provisions and the instruments necessary for working mines, so that if he made any discoveries, the Governor might have his share. Francisco Hernandez then thus departed, seeing that the weather was so favourable that he would not lose the opportunity, but probably with the sole intention of making a voyage of discovery, *for he went straight to a country hitherto unknown and unseen by our people,* where he found salt-pits, at a point which he named *Las Mugeres,* because he there discovered stone towers and chapels, covered with wood and straw, in which were arranged in order several idols resembling women. The Spaniards were astonished, for the first time to see strong edifices, which had not as yet been discovered, and also to perceive that the inhabitants were so richly and tastefully clothed. They wore shirts and cloaks of white and coloured cotton, their head-dress consisted of feathers, their ears were enriched with ear-drops and jewels of gold and silver. The women had their faces and breasts concealed. Hernandez did not stop there, but proceeded to another point, which he named Cotohe (Catoche), where there were some fishermen, who ran away from fear, and as our people called after them, answered, 'Cotohe, Cotohe,' that is to say, 'a house;' thinking our people were inquiring what town it was, and believing that it was our intention to go there, they said it was a house, and not a town. From that time this name has continued to this cape. A little further on they found other men, of whom they inquired the name of the large town close by. They answered, 'Tectatan, Tectatan,' which means 'I do not understand:' from this the Spaniards thought that this was the name of the town, and, corrupting the word, have ever since

called it 'Yucatan.' They found over the graves in this country crosses of copper and of wood, from which several persons were of opinion that the Spaniards had fled to this country when Spain was ravaged by the Moors, in the time of King Roderick; but I am not of this opinion, because no crosses were found in the islands already described, through which any one coming from Spain must necessarily have passed; and it is furthermore improbable that they would have quitted so many fine islands for the purpose of proceeding to this province: when speaking of the island of Cozumel I shall speak more particularly of these crosses. From this town of Yucatan Hernandez went to Campeche" (Campeachy, called by the Indians "Quimpech"), "a great place, which he named Lazaro, because he arrived there on the Sunday of Lazaro, which is in Lent. He landed, and the chief of the place and himself embraced each other, exchanged cloaks, feathers, large shells, and sea cray-fish set in gold and silver. They presented him with partridges, turtle-doves, goslings, cocks, hares, stags, and other animals which were good to eat, and bread made from Indian-corn, and fruits. They came close to the Spaniards, some of them touching their garments, others their swords and their beards, and all changed colour as they stood around them. There was in this place a square stone tower with steps, on the top of which there was an idol, which had at its side two cruel animals, represented as if they were desirous of devouring it. There was also a great serpent, forty-seven feet long, as broad as an ox, devouring a lion, the whole of it cut in stone. This idol was besmeared with human blood, which they had sacrificed to it, according to the custom of the country. From thence Hernandez

went to Champoton, which is a large town, the chief of which was called Mosciocoboc; he was a warrior and courageous. He would not barter anything with our people, nor supply them with provisions, nor make them presents, nor even allow them to draw water unless in exchange for their blood. Hernandez, not to appear cowardly, and to ascertain what arms, what skill, and what courage these Indians possessed, ordered his men to land, well armed, and desired his sailors to draw some water, putting his men in order of battle if the Indians opposed them. Mosciocoboc, wishing to remove our people further from the sea, so that they should have no retreat, made them a sign to go behind a hill where there was a spring. Our people, seeing that the Indians were painted, armed with arrows, and of a warlike expression of countenance, became alarmed, and ordered the ship guns to fire, in order to frighten them. The Indians were astonished at this fire and smoke, and were stupefied for a moment by the noise and thunder of these fiery-mouthed instruments, but nevertheless they did not run away. Thus affronted they assailed our people courageously, with unanimous promptitude, vociferating horribly, and throwing stones, spears, and arrows. Our people marched quietly up to them, and when near discharged their guns, drew their swords, and killed a great number of them, as well by thrusts as with the edge, which encountering nothing but their naked skin, cut off their heads and severed their bodies in two, their hands, their arms, and their legs. The Indians, although they had not been accustomed to such blows, sustained the battle, stimulated by the presence of their chief and captains, until they had gained it, quickly pursuing our people, of whom they killed twenty and wounded fifty

as they crowded to re-embark, and made two prisoners, whom they afterwards sacrificed. Hernandez was left with thirty wounded men, with whom he was constrained to re-embark, to his great danger. During his voyage back he was always pensive and melancholy, and arrived at Santiago much depressed, reporting nevertheless the good news of the discovery of this new coast."

In the account which De Solis has given of this affair[1], he says in general terms that Cordova was killed at Champoton; but there appears to be no doubt that Gomara's statement is correct[2], and that he survived his return ten days, when he died of the wounds—twelve in number—which he had received in the conflict with the Indians.

The account of this discovery, and the flattering hopes to which it gave birth, stimulated Velasquez to prepare another expedition in the same direction. It consisted of three caravels and a brigantine, and the command was entrusted to the Governor's nephew, Juan de Grijalva, "a man on whose probity, prudence, and attachment he could rely[3]." With Grijalva were associated Pedro de Alvarado, Francisco de Montejo (subsequently the first Governor of Yucatan), and Alonso de Avila, each of whom had the command of a vessel. The pilot Alaminos accompanied the expedition, which numbered "muchos caballeros é hidalgos[4]," and amongst them was Bernal Diaz del Castillo, the "Conquistador," and author of the 'True History of the Conquest of New Spain,' who had been with Cordova on his luckless

[1] Histoire de la Conquête de Mexique, traduite de l'Espagnol de Don Antoine de Solis: tom. i. p. 26. (Paris, 1714.)

[2] Herrera, Déc. 2, lib. ii. cap. 17.

[3] Prescott: History of the Conquest of Mexico, book ii. cap. 1.

[4] Coleccion de Navarrete, tom. i. p. 55.

voyage. The little squadron sailed from the Port of Matanzos on the 20th of April, 1518[1], entered the Bay of Carenas (the Havana) on the 22nd, and, directing its course by Cape Sant' Antonio, on the 3rd of May reached the island of Cozumel, to which, on account of the day, Grijalva gave the name of Santa Cruz. He anchored on the south side of the island, and on the 5th of May went ashore, and, falling on his knees, put up a short prayer to God[2]. He then rose, and having commanded his men to disembark, with all solemnity took possession of Cozumel, with all the lands and seas adjacent, in the name of the Crown of Spain. The Indians, who witnessed this ceremony, assembled on the shore under one of their Caciques, presented Grijalva with a vessel of honey, but the Spaniards were unwilling to taste of any food given to them; they however accepted some shirts and jewels. The Indians expressed by signs their desire that the strangers should visit their town, but, fatigued by following paths which led only into deep marshes, the Spaniards returned on board, and coasting the island, saw many houses built with stone and mortar and well wrought, which were temples, and a great tower, or fortress, in which were many people[3]. "Everywhere," says Prescott, "Grijalva was struck, like his predecessor, with the evidences of a higher civilization, especially in the architecture; as he well might be, since this was the region of those extraordinary remains which have become recently the subject of so much speculation."

[1] Ibid. Bernal Diaz says the 5th of April, other accounts the 8th, and Prescott, who states that the expedition sailed from Santiago, the 1st May.

[2] Coleccion de Navarrete, tom. iii. p. 55.

[3] Ibid., p. 56.

After some further intercourse with the natives, and having again taken possession of Cozumel in another part, displaying the royal banner of Castile, Grijalva made sail towards the north, but contrary winds and want of water caused him to turn back, and he took refuge in the Bay of Ascension, which he called by that name on account of having entered it on the 13th of May, which was Ascension-day in that year. Gomara says that Grijalva's reason for steering south was because he believed Yucatan to be an island, and thought by keeping to the left (the eastward) to effect his passage that way; and it is worthy of observation, as showing how strongly fixed was the idea that it was not a continent which lay between the Spanish navigators and the remote shores of Asia, that in all the official letters sent to the Government at this period, Yucatan is invariably adverted to as an island[1]. Grijalva remained only till the 15th in the Bay of Ascension, when, finding that the shore retreated to the south-west, and thinking probably that it would be safer to follow in the track of Francisco de Cordova, he again turned northward, and two days afterwards came in sight of land, which appears, from the description given of it, to have been the coast immediately adjoining Cape Catoche. Rounding this point, Grijalva pursued his voyage to Campeachy, and thence to Champoton, and wherever he landed he experienced the same hostile reception that Cordova had met with; at the latter place,—to which, on account of

[1] Documentos ineditos para la Historia de España, por Navarrete y Baranda: Madrid, 1842. One example out of many will suffice: in the letter written to the King (Charles V.) by the auditors of the "Real Audiencia" of Spain, giving an account of one of the expeditions from Cuba, they say (Documentos, tom. i. p. 501), "De allí seguímos el viage por toda la costa *de la isla de Yucatan*, etc."

the disasters which happened there, he gave the name of "Mala Pelea,"—Juan de Guataria and several men were killed, about sixty wounded, and Juan de Grijalva himself received three wounds and lost two of his teeth. Bernal Diaz, who enters into the particulars of this "evil skirmish," is quite pathetic on the subject. He says, "We staid four days in this place, and I shall never forget it on account of the immense-sized locusts which we saw here. It was a stony spot on which the battle took place, and those creatures, while it lasted, kept continually flying in our faces, and as at the same moment we were greeted by a shower of arrows from the enemy, we also mistook these locusts for arrows. But as soon as we had discovered our mistake, we deceived ourselves in another more direful way, for we now mistook arrows for locusts, and discontinued to shield ourselves against them. In this way we mistook locusts and arrows to our great sorrow, were severely wounded in consequence, and otherwise found ourselves in a very awkward predicament[1]."

Grijalva now coasted onward to the south, and where the shore abruptly turns due west came to an opening which seemed the mouth of a river, but proved to be a large and deep bay, and, supposing it to be the limit of the "island" of Yucatan on that shore, he called it the "Boca de Terminos," the name which it still retains. "As we also found temples here, built of stone and lime, full of idols made of wood or clay, with other figures, sometimes representing women, sometimes serpents, also horns of various kinds of wild animals, we concluded that an Indian village must be near at hand; we considered moreover that this would be a most excellent

[1] Bernal Diaz (Lockhart's translation), vol. i. p. 24. (London, 1844.)

spot to found a colony. We had however deceived ourselves in one thing, the district being quite uninhabited. The temples most probably belonged to merchants and hunters, who, on their journeys, most likely ran into this harbour and there made their sacrifices. Fallow-deer and rabbits abounded in this neighbourhood, and with one greyhound only we killed ten of the former and great numbers of the latter. Our dog took such a liking to this spot that it ran away while we were busy re-embarking, nor did we see it again until we visited this place subsequently with Cortes, when it appeared in excellent condition, quite plump and sleeky[1]."

Having completely explored the Boca de Terminos, and discovering that it was a bay, and *not a river or strait*, Grijalva pursued his course on the west as far as the river Tabasco, to which, in honour of the commander of the expedition, his name was given. Here the natives were more friendly than they had hitherto found them, and exchanges were made of various articles, necklaces of blue glass beads, small mirrors, and green imitation corals being given by the Spaniards for gold ornaments and dresses; but the Indians would take no strong drink, the only ones, the adventurers said, who had refused to do so. This intercourse, which took place beneath some palm-trees on a high promontory, is thus described by Bernal Diaz.

"About thirty Indians soon arrived, laden with broiled fish, fowls, fruit, and maize-bread. They also brought pans filled with red-hot embers, on which they strewed incense, and perfumed us all. After this ceremony was ended they spread some mats on the ground, over which they laid a piece of cotton cloth; on this they put some

[1] Bernal Diaz, vol. i. p. 25.

trifling ornaments in gold in the shape of ducks and lizards, with three necklaces made of gold, which had been melted into the shape of round balls. All these things however were of an inferior kind of gold, not worth two hundred pesos. They next presented us with some mantles and waistcoats, such as they themselves wore, and begged of us to accept them in good part, saying that they had no more gold to give us, but that further on, towards the setting of the sun, there was a country where it was found in great abundance, hereby often repeating the words Culba, Culba, and Mexico, Mexico. We however did not understand what they meant. Although the presents which they had brought us were of little value, we nevertheless rejoiced exceedingly on account of the certainty we had gained that there was gold in this country. Having handed over the presents to us with due formality, they told us we might now continue our voyage. Our captain thanked them, presenting each at the same time with green beads. We now determined to re-embark, for the vessels were in great danger on account of the north wind, which, in our present intention, was quite contrary. We had moreover to go in quest of the country which, according to the assurance of the Indians, abounded in gold[1]."

Having got beyond the boundaries of Yucatan, a brief mention of the further progress of Grijalva's expedition is all that is necessary for the purpose of this narrative. Pursuing his course to the westward, he traced the coast of Mexico as far as San Juan de Ulloa, where he landed and took possession of the territory in the name of the King of Spain. His intercourse with the Indians was of a very friendly nature, and a system

[1] Bernal Diaz, vol. i. pp. 27–8.

of barter was established, by which, in exchange for articles of Spanish manufacture, he obtained some pieces of native gold, a variety of golden ornaments enriched with precious stones, and a quantity of cotton mantles and other garments. Intending to prosecute his discoveries further, Grijalva despatched these objects to Velasquez in the caravel commanded by Pedro de Alvarado, who was also charged with the sick and wounded of the expedition, and then ascended the Mexican coast as far northward as Panuco (the present Tampico). But this point was the extreme limit of his voyage, for his provisions began to fall short,—the aspect of the country, whose lofty mountains were covered with snow in the month of June, appeared uninviting,—and being moreover doubtful of the nature of the currents in that unknown sea, he yielded to the representations of the pilot Alaminos, and, without even casting anchor or landing on the coast, returned upon his track towards the island of Cuba.

The period at which he arrived there involves a question of some interest; but before that subject is entered upon, it may be desirable to show that by the result of Grijalva's expedition the external form of Yucatan was completely ascertained. Its south-easternmost extremity had been determined by De Solis and Pinzon when they discovered the Bay of Dulce, and Grijalva's examination of the Boca de Terminos completed the western limit. As regards discovery on the coast, the next expedition from Cuba in the following year, under the conduct of Cortes, effected nothing; but the visit paid to the shores of Yucatan by that renowned conqueror is too full of interest to be omitted in any account of its early history.

CHAPTER II.

CRISTOVAL DE OLID SENT IN SEARCH OF GRIJALVA.—ARRIVAL OF PEDRO DE ALVARADO AT SANTIAGO.—DISAPPOINTMENT OF VELASQUEZ.—HIS DIFFICULTY AS TO A NEW COMMANDER.—SELECTION OF HERNANDO CORTES.—PREPARATIONS FOR A NEW EXPEDITION.—THE INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN BY VELASQUEZ TO CORTES.—DISPUTED QUESTION AS TO THE PERIOD OF GRIJALVA'S RETURN.—DOUBTS ENTERTAINED BY VELASQUEZ OF THE FIDELITY OF CORTES.—DEPARTURE OF CORTES FOR SANTIAGO.—SUBSEQUENT ATTEMPTS OF VELASQUEZ TO DEPRIVE HIM OF HIS COMMAND.—CORTES SAILS FROM THE HAVANA.—THE FLEET DISPERSED BY A STORM.—ARRIVAL AT COZUMEL.—CAPTURE AND PACIFIC TREATMENT OF INDIANS.—DISCOVERY OF A CAPTIVE SPANIARD.—IDOLATRY OF THE NATIVES.—FIRST ATTEMPT TO INTRODUCE THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.—GERONIMO DE AGUILAR.—CORTES LEAVES THE COAST OF YUCATAN.

THE absence of Grijalva for a longer period than had been anticipated, combined with the recollection of the ill-success which had attended the expedition of Cordova, began to cause considerable anxiety to Diego Velasquez after the lapse of a few months from the departure of the former, and he determined upon sending a vessel in search of him. He therefore fitted out a caravel, under Cristoval de Olid, with instructions to obtain intelligence of Grijalva, and afford him assistance if necessary[1]. But Olid did not accomplish his mission: he pro-

[1] Gomara: Cronica de la Nueva España, con la Conquista de Mexico, etc. cap. vii. V. Appendix A. (Folio: Çaragoça, 1554.)

ceeded no further than the coast of Yucatan, where he encountered such severe weather that he returned direct to Cuba.

Soon after his departure, Pedro de Alvarado arrived at Santiago in the vessel which Grijalva had despatched from San Juan de Ulloa, and great was the satisfaction which Velasquez experienced at the news of the discoveries made by his nephew, and at the consignment of the objects for which he had traded. But this satisfaction was considerably alloyed by the intelligence that Grijalva had neglected one of the chief purposes of his voyage, that of founding a colony in the newly discovered country, without which he could not hope for any permanent advantage to accrue either to himself or to the King his master.

The Governor of Cuba had positive evidence before him of the wealth of the land which Grijalva had reached, but he felt that, even if his nephew were on the spot, he was not the man to whom the command of such an expedition as he now meditated could with safety be entrusted. He doubted Grijalva's prudence and ability, and occupied himself to find one who should unite all the requisites for leading a third and more important enterprise. His thoughts first turned to Vasco Porcallo, a captain of great renown and a relation of the Conde de Feria[1], but he was apprehensive that Porcallo, who is described as being of a "daring spirit," would, when once at sea, speedily emancipate himself from all control and act independently, thus depriving him of the chief credit of the undertaking and perhaps of all its profit, to which latter consideration Velasquez was by no means indifferent. He would not therefore propose the expe-

[1] Bernal Diaz, cap. xix. p. 43.

dition to Porcallo, but offered it to Baltasar Bermudez, a man of an extremely haughty disposition, who "proposed such unreasonable terms that Velasquez sent him away with hard words[1]." The Governor of Cuba was consequently more favourably disposed to listen to the recommendation of two persons who had great influence over him: these were Andreas de Duero, his secretary, and Amador de Lares, the royal treasurer, and they persuaded him to bestow the command on one who had already given proof of his being well qualified to head an expedition, the conduct of which demanded sagacity and courage.

This man was Hernando Cortes. Of his previous history it is unnecessary to say more than that he was a native of Medellin in Old Spain, and descended both by his father and mother from two ancient and noble families in Estremadura; that he had served in his youth in Italy under the great Captain Gonsalvo de Cordova, had subsequently sought his fortune in St. Domingo, the Governor of which island was Don Nicolas de Obando, his relation; had achieved distinction there as well by the affability of his manners as by his military abilities; and, passing from thence to Cuba, had obtained employment under Diego Velasquez, who gave him an office of consideration[2].

His pretensions to the command of the proposed expedition were so strongly urged by his two friends, who, Bernal Diaz tells us, had a personal interest in the matter[3], that Velasquez made no difficulty in granting

[1] Herrera.

[2] De Solis, in his 'Histoire de la Conquête de Mexique' (tom. i. p. 53, édition de Paris, 1714), says, "Le Gouverneur lui donna un département d'Indiens et la charge de Juge Royal de la ville de St. Jacques." Herrera and Bernal Diaz both gave him the title of *Alcalde*; the latter calls him "Alcalde of Santiago de Boroco."

[3] "The above-mentioned confi-

their request, though he was influenced by other considerations than those which arose merely from the fitness and ability of Cortes for the office. The Governor of Cuba was avaricious, and cared not to venture too much money on his own account[1]. Cortes, on the other hand, was of a liberal and generous nature, and when it was proposed to him by Velasquez to share in the expedition[2] he gave a ready assent, his chief care being to raise the necessary means, for men, he knew, would not be wanting. Velasquez and Cortes accordingly concerted together, and despatched Juan de Sancedo, who had returned with Alvarado, to obtain a license from the Hieronymite Friars, who administered the government in St. Domingo, for an expedition to trade and colonize, and also to search for Grijalva, the command of which, as Captain-General, was to be conferred on Hernando Cortes[3]. The Hieronymites granted the permission required, stipulating only that a royal treasurer and overseer should be appointed, and the fifth part of the profits reserved, as was the custom, for the King.

In the meantime, while the answer was expected from St. Domingo, Cortes began to make preparations for the

dants of Diego Velasquez did all in their power to obtain the appointment of Commander-in-chief for Cortes; who, on the other hand, had promised to share equally with them all the profits arising from the gold, silver, and jewels which during this expedition should fall to his share."—*Bernal Diaz.*

[1] "Tenia poco estómago para gastar: siēdo codicioso." — *Gomara.*

[2] "Que armassen ambos á medias."—*Ibid.*

[3] The preceding Governor of St. Domingo (or Hispaniola), of which Cuba was a dependency, was Nicolas de Obando, who was nominated successor to Francisco de Bobadilla in 1502, and held office for seven years, during which period he made several conquests for the Crown of Spain, including the province of Honduras. He was recalled to Spain on the usual ground of "accusations," and had a vexatious lawsuit for several years, to recover his revenues and re-establish the rights of his office as Grand Admiral. It was then that Cardinal Cisneres, Archbishop of Toledo, sent out the Hieronymite Friars.

voyage. He acquainted his friends with the nature of the compact into which he had entered with Velasquez, and no sooner was it generally known than three hundred of the most enterprising spirits in the island flocked to his standard. Neither was money wanting: the Governor supplied him with a certain proportion, about two-fifths of the whole sum required[1], and the merchants of Santiago advanced the rest, with which Cortes armed, provisioned, and fully equipped his fleet, and so speedily that only five days elapsed between the date of his appointment and the period of his being ready for sea. It now only remained that the agreement between Velasquez and Cortes, as trading partners, should be publicly attested, and this, says Gomara, took place on the 23rd of October, 1518, before the Royal Notary Alonso de Escalante[2]. The "Instructions" which the Governor of Cuba gave to Cortes bear also the same date; and here arises a singular discrepancy between the alleged period of Grijalva's return to Cuba, and the fact itself, as it appears on the face of the document[3]. The "Instruccion," after reciting the fact of Grijalva's mission, goes on to say, "As many days have passed since, reasonably, news of him might have been looked for, from which it is presumed, *since such news up to this day is not known,*

[1] This is stated in the "Declaracion" made by Francisco de Montejo at Coruña, on the 29th of April, 1520.

[2] "Capituláron ambos lo que cada uno havia de hazer: ante Alonso de Escalante, escrivano público, y real: á veynte y tres dias de Otubre, del año de deziocho."—*Gomara.*

[3] "Instruccion que dió el Capitan Diego Velasquez, en la isla Fernandina, en 23 de Octobre de 1518, al capitan Hernando Cortés, á quien con una armada enviaba al socorro de la que llevó Juan de Grijalva vicino de la Isla de la Trinidad," etc.

It is taken, says Navarrete, from the original in the archives of Seville, "entre los papeles enviados dél de Simancas, legajo 5° de los rotulados de Relaciones y Descripciones." It was moreover sworn to by Diego Velasquez himself at Santiago, "on Thursday, October 13th, 1519, before the Alcalde Diego de Duero."

that he must either be in some (distant) place or (standing) in extreme necessity of succour[1]," etc. It then recapitulates the nature of Grijalva's discoveries, which Velasquez had learnt from Alvarado, and after alluding to certain Christians, supposed to be captives in Yucatan, proceeds to instruct Cortes in the course he is to take. After the enumeration of various duties, the fifteenth paragraph again adverts to the search after Grijalva, supposing him to be still in the *island* of Vera Cruz[2]; and other paragraphs of the "Instructions" point out the steps to be taken when Grijalva's vessel is found.

Now it is impossible to suppose, from the formality with which this document is worded, and the date it bears, that Velasquez could have been aware at the time it was issued that Grijalva had already returned to Cuba. Yet some of the leading Spanish historians concur in stating that such was the case, and ascribe the motives which subsequently influenced the conduct of Velasquez towards Cortes to a knowledge of the fact.

Oviedo, who is the most particular, and who was himself in Cuba in 1523, states[3] that Grijalva on his return from Mexico made the island of Cuba on the 29th of September, 1518, sighting that part of it which

[1] "Como ha muchos dias que de razon habia de haber sabido nueva dél, de que se presume, pues tal nueva dél hasta hoy no se sabe, que debe se tener ó estar en alguna ó extrema necesidad de socorro."

[2] "Item: Llegado que á la dicha isla Santa Cruz seais y por todas las otras tierras donde fuéreis, trabajaréis por todas las vias que pudiéredes de inquerir é saber alguna nueva del armada que Juan de Grijalva llevó, porque podria ser que el dicho Juan de Grijalva se oviese vuelto á esta isla, é tuviesen ellos della nueva é lo supiesen de cierto, ó que estoviese en alguna parte ó puerto de la dicha isla, é asímismo por la dicha órden trabajaréis de saber nueva de la carabela que llevó á cargo Cristoval Dolid, que fué en seguimiento del dicho Juan de Grijalva, sabréis si allegó á la dicha isla, é si saben que derrota llevó, ó si tienen ó sepan alguna nueva de á donde está é como."

[3] Historia General y Natural de las Indias, lib. xvii. cap. 18. (Madrid, 1851.)

is called Marien, and on the following day reached the harbour of Carenas (the Havana), where he landed accompanied by a few men, to endeavour to ascertain if Alvarado had arrived, a fact of which he became assured by certain inhabitants of the town of St. Cristoval. Grijalva, Oviedo says, remained on shore that night, and after accounting for the interval that took place, lands him again on the 4th of October at the port of Xaruco; on the 5th he places him in the port of Chipiona, and on the 8th in that of Matanzas, where, he adds, Grijalva fell in with Cristoval de Olid, who had been sent in search of him. Oviedo finally asserts that Grijalva and his "three vessels, together with that of Cristoval de Olid," sailed for Santiago "on the night of Friday, the 22nd of October, 1518[1]," had very adverse weather, and thus was delayed "some days" before he reached that port.

These dates are very precise, and would be tolerably conclusive were it not for the remark which Oviedo makes, that, "when Diego Velasquez determined upon sending out Hernando Cortes lately, with another armada, he had received no news of Grijalva nor of the caravel in which Olid had been sent to look for him[2]."

Respecting the period of Grijalva's return, Bernal Diaz says that, "*immediately after it took place*, Diego Velasquez issued orders for the fitting out of a more considerable armament than the foregoing[3]." But this statement is too general to outweigh documentary evidence of any kind, to say nothing of the formal character of the

[1] Appendix B.

[2] "Es de saber que quando Diego Velasquez se determinó de enviar á Hernando Cortés con otra armada, no se sabia nueva alguna de Grijalva ni de la caravela que avia enviada Chripstobal de Olid á le buscar."

[3] Bernal Diaz, cap. xix. p. 42.

"Instruccion." Gomara too, who is usually held to be the best authority on all that relates to Cortes, assigns no particular date, but says simply that "Grijalva returned at this season[1];" though in another place he is somewhat more specific, his words being, "He was absent five months until he returned to the same island (Cuba), and eight (months) from the time he left Santiago and returned to that city[2]."

The natural conclusion from these statements appears to be that Grijalva returned to Cuba towards the latter part of the year 1518, but that his return was not known to Velasquez till after the "Instruccion" had been delivered to Cortes. It was not the presence of Grijalva[3] that was necessary to make Velasquez repent the eagerness with which he had entered into the contract with Cortes, for doubts of his fidelity had already been instilled into the mind of the Governor by the enemies of the future conqueror of Mexico, who did their utmost to obtain from Velasquez the revocation of the commission he had given, asking him "how he could be guilty of so great a mistake as to trust Cortes in an enterprise of such consequence, wherein his honour and his fortune were so deeply concerned; declaring that it was certain that Cortes would revolt with the fleet, being so subtle and crafty as he was[4]." These representations appear

[1] By an error of punctuation the French translator of Gomara, M. Fumée, Sieur de Marly le Chastel, gives the "23rd of October" as the period. *Vide* Appendix C.

[2] "Tardó cinco meses desde que salió hasta que tornó á la mesma isla (Cuba), y ocho desde que salió de Santiago hasta que bolvió á la ciudad."

[3] This is apparent from the reception which Grijalva met with from his uncle when he announced his return to Santiago. "And when he arrived," says Gomara, "Diego Velasquez would not see him, which was his punishment," ("Y quando llegó, no lo quiso ver Diego Velasquez, que fué su merescido.") —All the authorities state the same thing. The harshness of Velasquez arose from Grijalva's neglect of his orders to colonize the newly-found countries.

[4] Herrera: History, vol. ii. p. 149.

to have had weight with Velasquez, who "resolved to put him out of that employment[1]," but Cortes, obtaining information of his intention, hurried forward every preparation, and before Velasquez could take any step for his recall he received the intimation that Cortes was already on board and about to sail[2]. The Governor hastened then to bid him farewell, and the reply which the future governor of Mexico made, when told by Velasquez that it was an odd way of taking his leave of him, is highly characteristic of the man. "Pray, Sir," said Cortes, "excuse me, for things of this nature are to be put in execution before they are thought of[3]."

The Governor and Captain-General parted however on terms of apparent cordiality, and on the 18th of November, 1518, Cortes sailed out of the harbour of Santiago, on the memorable expedition which has given him a world-wide fame.

But the hasty manner in which his fleet had been manned and equipped, did not permit him to proceed at once in the direction of the newly-discovered country:

[1] Herrera: History, vol. ii. p. 149.

[2] There can be no doubt, however, that this feeling on the part of Velasquez was strengthened after he knew of Grijalva's return. Gomara says: "Y uvo con su venida *mudança* en Diego Velasquez:" "There was on his arrival a change in Diego Velasquez." It was known by Grijalva's report that wealth abounded on the newly-found shores of Mexico, and the cupidity of Velasquez made him desirous of obtaining better conditions from some other commander than had been agreed upon with Cortes. Balthasar Bermudez too had begun to repent his first extravagant demands, and would willingly have undertaken the expedition on the Governor's own terms. These motives were quite sufficient with Velasquez to induce him to try to get Cortes to relinquish the enterprise, and he employed agents to urge him to that effect: but Cortes held steadily to his purpose, "declaring," says Gomara, "that he would not depart from his contract with the Governor. If," he said, "Diego Velasquez wishes to send another, let him do so. I, for my part, have the license of the Father Governors." And he straightway renewed those exertions which enabled him to get his army speedily from Santiago.

[3] Herrera: History, vol. ii. p. 150.

it was necessary that he should obtain further supplies of ammunition, provisions, and men,—and he knew of many cavaliers of distinction who were urgent to join him, before he finally put to sea. The first port therefore at which he touched was the city of Trinidad, in the bay of that name, to the westward of Santiago; and, landing here, he again proclaimed the objects of the expedition, and received numerous reinforcements, including a hundred of Grijalva's men, together with Pedro de Alvarado and Alfonso de Avila, who had been captains under that commander, and several others of note; but while staying at Trinidad, two couriers arrived overland from Santiago, bearing letters from Diego Velasquez to those in his confidence, and an order to Francisco Verdugo, the cousin of the former, and the Royal Judge of the city, to dispossess Cortes from his command. The Captain-General was soon made aware of this intended movement, and exerted himself so successfully amongst his men, as to make them unanimous for his retention; and the representations which he made to Verdugo were of so much effect, that the latter soon saw, not only how ungenerous, but how impolitic it would be to attempt to enforce the Governor's order,—but added letters of his own, to those which Cortes addressed to Velasquez, expressive of his astonishment at the resolution he had taken, "particularly as he (Cortes) had no other design than to serve God, his Majesty the King, and the Governor[1]." But this was not the only effort made by Velasquez to remove Cortes, for on the arrival of the latter at the Havana, where he was obliged to touch, in order to take on board the horses and further supplies which he required for the

[1] Bernal Diaz, vol. i. p. 50.

expedition, he found that an order to arrest him, more imperative than that sent to Verdugo, had been transmitted to Pedro Barba, the Sub-Governor there. The fact was communicated to him by the bearer of the despatches himself, one Gerovia; and Cortes, as he had done before at Trinidad, took such effectual means of strengthening himself,—winning over to his side all the commanders whose friendship had been doubtful,—that Pedro de Barba was also compelled to write back to the Governor that he durst not take Cortes into custody, as he was too powerful, and too much beloved by the soldiers; and that he feared that, if he made the attempt, the town would be plundered, and the whole of the inhabitants forcibly dragged away. "For the rest," says Bernal Diaz, "he could assure Diego Velasquez that Cortes was quite devoted to him, and did nothing that could be said to militate against his interests. Cortes himself also wrote a letter, couched in those smooth terms he so very well knew how to employ, assuring Velasquez of the unabated friendship he entertained for him, and that he was going to set sail the next day."

With this epigrammatic intimation the correspondence ended, and, free from all further hindrances, Cortes issued his sailing-orders, and, under the protection of St. Peter, the patron of the expedition, left the port of the Havana, with nine vessels, on the 19th of February, 1519[1], and proceeded to Cape Sant' Antonio, where he was joined by two more vessels, and a muster was made of his whole force. "There were," says Herrera[2], "five hundred and eight soldiers, one hundred and ten masters and mariners, sixteen horses and mares, thirty-two cross-bowmen, thirteen musketeers, ten pieces of brass can-

[1] De Solis, tom. i. p. 75. [2] History, cap. ii. p. 164.

non, and four falconets, with sufficient store of powder and ball. He appointed Francisco de Orosco, a man of valour, who had served in Italy, Captain of the Artillery, and Antonio de Alaminos, chief pilot; he distributed the men into eleven companies, under the Captains Alonso Hernandez Puertocarrero, Alonso de Avila, Diego de Ordas, Francisco de Montejo (afterwards the first Viceroy of Yucatan), Francisco de Morla, Francisco de Sancedo, Juan de Escalante, Juan Velasquez de Leon, Cristoval de Olid, and Pedro de Alvarado,—reserving another for himself; and each captain embarked on board a several ship, to command both by sea and land." The burden of the Admiral's ship was a hundred tons; three others were eighty tons each; and the remainder were brigantines, and small vessels without decks. His standard was of black taffeta, with a red cross on it amidst white and blue flames, with this motto, in Latin, "Amici, crucem sequamur, et in hoc signo vincemus."

The muster made, Cortes harangued the troops in a speech which "raised great alacrity amongst his companions, who admired his discretion, and were confirmed in the opinion conceived of his great capacity, concluding that his valour would secure their success. On the other hand, he was highly pleased to find his men in so good a disposition, and from that time began to issue out his commands with gravity and modesty, so that he fully executed the office of a Commander-in-chief[1]."

The fleet then made sail to the westward, the island of Cozumel having been appointed for the place of rendezvous. On the first night a violent storm dispersed all the vessels, and that under the command of Pedro de Alvarado arrived two days before the rest. Alvarado

[1] Herrera.

landed with some of his men, but, finding the village of Cozumel deserted, proceeded to another village a few miles inland, the inhabitants of which had likewise fled, without however being able to carry off all their property, and, such things as there were, the Spaniards took possession of. "Out of a temple near at hand," says Bernal Diaz, who was one of Alvarado's party, "we took several cotton mats, and a few small boxes containing a species of diadem, small idols, corals, with all manners of trinkets, made of an inferior sort of gold. We also took two Indians, and a female, prisoners; after which we returned to the village near which we had landed." When Cortes arrived, he was very much displeased at what Alvarado had done, telling him it was not the way to gain the love of the inhabitants, by robbing them of their property; and, having the prisoners brought before him, he told them, through his interpreter, Melchior (who, with another Indian, had been captured at Catoche by Grijalva), to return to their cacique, for they had nothing to fear from the Spaniards; he moreover presented to them fifty hawk-bells, some glass beads, and two shirts. The result of this policy, which Cortes acted upon on all occasions, was to inspire the inhabitants with perfect confidence, and henceforward they visited his camp without the slightest fear.

With his mind full of the attractions of the more distant land, the prosecution of further discovery on the eastern shores of Yucatan was not the object of Cortes; but there were circumstances that occurred during his stay at Cozumel, which it may not be out of place to speak of, as they tend to illustrate the character of the inhabitants, and have besides an interest special to the expedition of the great adventurer.

In an interview with some of the caciques, expressions were used by them which confirmed Cortes in the impression that certain of his countrymen were prisoners on the continent not far from Cozumel; and this belief was further strengthened when the Indians told him that they had themselves seen "bearded men" like the Spaniards, who lived two days' march inland and were slaves to one of the caciques of that part of the country. The first impulse of Cortes was to procure their liberation, and for this purpose he wrote a letter to his unknown countrymen, which he prevailed upon two Indians to undertake to deliver. In this letter he stated that, having heard of their detention, he had sent an armed ship with ransom-money, to wait for them for eight days off Cape Catoche, and bring them to Cozumel, where he was then with his expedition, intending, "with the aid of the Almighty and their assistance, to proceed to a place called Tabasco, or Pontonchon." The "assistance" which he expected from the prisoners was of course the benefit to be derived from their acting as interpreters in his further progress. That the letter might not be discovered, as the messengers were naked, "it was hid under the hair of one of them, which they wore long, platted, and wound about their head[1]," and, gratified by some small presents, the Indians departed on their errand, being conveyed to Cape Catoche by Diego de Ordas, who was instructed to wait for the captives.

Two days after they had landed, the messengers succeeded in discovering one of the Spaniards, to whom they gave the letter and the ransom-money, and the overjoyed prisoner obtained his freedom without difficulty; the admiration of his master being greatly raised

[1] Herrera.

at the fact that persons at a distance should understand one another through the medium of written communication. But this Spaniard, whose name it was afterwards learnt was Geronimo de Aguilar, had a companion in captivity, named Gonsalo Guerrero, though it appears by the sequel he was a voluntary prisoner, for, when Aguilar made known to him the proposal of Cortes, he stated the reasons which made him prefer to remain where he was. These were, that he had married one of the women of the country, by whom he had three children, that when war took place with any of the neighbouring tribes he was as good as a cacique or chief, and that, his face having been disfigured and his ears pierced, he was ashamed to show himself to his countrymen. Guerrero's wife also protested, and reproached Aguilar with endeavouring to take her husband from her; so that all his arguments and entreaties failed, and he was left to return alone.

Meantime the patience of Diego de Ordas failed. He had waited one or two days beyond the time prescribed, and then, finding that no one appeared, returned to Cozumel, where he was very unfavourably received by Cortes, who told him "with great vehemence, he expected he would have fulfilled his commission better than to return without the Spaniards, and even without bringing them any information respecting them, although well aware that they were staying in that country[1]."

Another subject had also occupied Cortes during the absence of Ordas. It appears that the island of Cozumel was reputed a holy place, and contained many considerable temples, to which the Indians went on pilgrimage from several parts of the continent to sacrifice to

[1] Bernal Diaz: Herrera.

their gods, and their idolatry moved the religious zeal of Cortes to bring them to a knowledge of "the true faith." The account which Bernal Diaz has given of this attempt on his part is very characteristic.

"One morning we perceived that the place where these horrible images stood was crowded with Indians and their wives. They burnt a species of resin, which very much resembled our incense, and as such a sight was so novel to us, we paid particular attention to all that went forward. Upon this, an old man, who had a wide cloak, and was a priest, mounted on the very top of the temple and began preaching something to the Indians. We were all very curious to know what the purport of this sermon was, and Cortes desired Melchorijo (Melchior) to interpret it to him. Finding that all he had been saying tended to ungodliness, Cortes ordered the caziques, with the principal men amongst them and the priests, into his presence, giving them to understand as well as he could by means of our interpreter, that if they were desirous of becoming our brethren they must give up sacrificing to their idols, which were no gods, but evil beings, by which they were led into error and their souls sent to hell. He then presented them with the image of the Virgin Mary and a cross, which he desired them to put up instead. These would procure a blessing to them at all times, make their seeds grow, and preserve their souls from eternal perdition. This, and many other things respecting our holy religion, Cortes explained to them in a very excellent manner. The caziques and priests answered that their forefathers had prayed to their idols before them, because they were good gods, and that they were determined to follow their example, adding, that we should experience

what power they possessed: as soon as we had left them we should certainly all of us go to the bottom of the sea. Cortes however took very little heed of their threats, but commanded the idols to be pulled down and broken to pieces, which was accordingly done without any further ceremony. He then ordered a great quantity of lime to be collected, which is here in abundance, and with the assistance of the Indian masons, a very pretty altar was constructed, on which we placed the image of the Holy Virgin. At the same time two of our carpenters, Alonso Yañez and Alvaro Lopez, made a cross of new wood which lay at hand, and this was set up in a kind of chapel which we built behind the altar. After all this was completed, Father Juan Diaz said mass in front of the new altar, the caziques and priests looking on with the greatest attention[1]."

Having thus endeavoured to make the Roman Catholic religion known, Cortes became desirous of prosecuting his further voyage, and the return of Urdas without the expected interpreter having deprived him of all hope of being joined by him, he charged the Indians to keep the altar clean and decent, to decorate it with green boughs, and moreover to pray to the Virgin and to the Holy Cross, assuring them that they would derive great benefit from doing so. The Indians promised compliance with all his wishes, presented him with some fowls and jars of honey, and then took leave in the most friendly manner.

Cortes soon afterwards embarked, but he had hardly got out to sea before it was discovered that the ship of Juan de Escalante, which was laden with cassava-bread, had sprung a leak, and, in fear of sinking, had put about

[1] Bernal Diaz, cap. xxvii. p. 61.

for the harbour they had just quitted. He accordingly signalled the return of the whole fleet to Cozumel, which was done, and the ship was ordered to be unloaded for the necessary repairs. Their return having soon been discovered by the Indians, the caciques and priests again made their appearance, and, learning the reason why the Spaniards had put back, readily lent the assistance of their canoes to unload the damaged vessel. But what pleased Cortes even more than this friendly disposition was the discovery that, after his departure, the Indians had obeyed his instructions with regard to the altar, which they had kept clean and decorated as he desired, and had placed incense before it. The refitting of Escalante's ship occupied four days, and during its progress word was brought to Cortes that a canoe was in sight, approaching the island from the direction of Cape Catoche. After closely observing it, Cortes directed Andreas de Tapia to take a few men with him, and go as much under the shelter of the land as he could, and endeavour to take the canoe, which was making for the shore behind a point of land. The canoe contained several men, who appeared to be Indians, and as soon as they had landed, Tapia went towards the shore, sword in hand, but at the same time calling out to them not to be afraid. Three of the party however took flight and would have returned to the canoe, but the fourth exclaimed in Spanish, "Soy Cristiano, hidalgos," by which they guessed that he was their countryman whom Cortes had been so desirous to rescue. This man proved, in fact, to be Geronimo de Aguilar, and one of Tapia's men immediately ran off to inform Cortes of the circumstance, the Spaniard meantime giving vent to his satisfaction by broken exclamations of "Dios!" "Santissima Maria!"

and "Sevilla!" which still further reassured his captors. The intimation of Aguilar's arrival was very joyfully received by Cortes and all the expedition, and it was not long before Tapia himself approached with the new-comer, whom Bernal Diaz calls "the strange-looking Spaniard."

"As they passed by us," he says, "many of our men still kept inquiring of Tapia which among them was the Spaniard, although he was walking at his very side, so much did his countenance resemble that of an Indian. His complexion was naturally of a brownish cast, added to which his hair had been shorn like that of an Indian slave. He carried a paddle across his shoulder, had one of his legs covered with an old tattered stocking, the other, which was not much better, being tied around his waist. An old ragged cloak hung over his shoulders; his *maltatas* were in a much worse condition. His prayer-book, which was very much torn, he had placed in the corner of his cloak. When Cortes beheld the man in this attire, he, as all the rest of us had done, asked Tapia where the Spaniard was. When Geronimo heard this, he cowered down after the Indian fashion, and said, 'I am he!' Upon this Cortes gave him a shirt, a coat, a pair of trowsers, a cap, and shoes, from out of our stores. He then desired him to give us an account of the adventures of his life, and explain how he had got into this country[1]."

[1] Bernal Diaz, cap. xxix. p. 64. Herrera's account offers this variety:—"The new-comer and his Indian companions paid the greatest respect, and crouched down upon their knees, laying their bows and arrows on the ground at their right hands; then having moistened their right hands with spittle, they touched the ground, and stroked their breasts next the heart, that being the greatest respect they paid to their princes, to denote that they humbled themselves in their presence to the ground they trod on. Cortes being informed that this was the form of salutation, he again bid

The history of this man's adventures was a singular one. His name, he said, was Geronimo de Aguilar, and he was a native of Ecija, about forty miles from Seville, and was related to the Licentiate Mark de Aguilar, whom Cortes knew, and that, previously to leaving Spain, he had taken deacon's orders. Being at Darien about eight years previously, during the disputes between Vasco Nuñez de Balboa and Diego de Nicuessa, he had joined Valdivia, who was bound for the island of St. Domingo, to make a report to the Admiral there of the proceedings in Darien, and carry a sum of twenty thousand ducats for the royal treasury. On approaching Jamaica the caravel in which they were was wrecked on the shoals called the *Caymanes*, or alligators[1]. Aguilar and twenty more got into the long-boat in the hopes of making either the coast of Jamaica or of Cuba, but, being without sail, the currents carried them in an opposite direction, and, after enduring great hardships, during which seven of their number died from want of water and provisions, they were drifted to the coast of a province called *Maya*, where, as soon as they landed, they fell into the hands of a cruel cacique, who sacrificed Valdivia and four others, offering them up to his idols and then eating them. The same fate would have befallen Aguilar and the rest of his companions, but they were not fat enough for killing[2], and they were penned up in coops till they got into condition. The destined

Aguilar welcome, and taking off a long yellow robe, trimmed with crimson, he had then on, with his own hands put it upon him, desiring he would rise off his hams, and sit on a chair, asking his name." —History, vol. ii. p. 171.

[1] De Solis says "The Alacranes," but as this shoal lies to the north of Yucatan in the Gulf of Mexico, it is more probable that Aguilar was wrecked on the Great Cayman, which lies to the north-west of Jamaica and nearly south from Trinidad in Cuba.

[2] This is a *pendant* to Sinbad's case on his fourth voyage.

victims contrived however to effect their escape, and fled across the mountains, succeeding at last in reaching the dominions of a cacique who had no cannibal propensities, but treated them with humanity, that is to say, not taking their lives, and merely making them slaves. Of the seven who thus escaped five shortly died, leaving only Geronimo de Aguilar and another Spaniard named Gonsalo Guerrero, the same who was his companion when the letter of Cortes was sent. Guerrero, he added, was made a slave by the Cacique of Chetumal, named *Machancam*, who, on account of the service he rendered him in war, became much attached to him and gave him for his wife "a prime lady of that country, by whom he had children[1]," on which account he was unwilling to come away with him. Questioned by Cortes concerning the country and its inhabitants, Aguilar said he was not able to give him much information about either, as he had been treated like a slave, and chiefly employed in fetching wood and water, and working in the maize plantations[2]. It was only upon one occasion that he was sent on some business to a distance of about twelve miles from his village, but, owing to a heavy burden he had to carry and the weakness of his body, he had not even been able to reach so far, but he had heard that the country was thinly populated. Guerrero, he continued, had in every respect adopted the Indian customs, having had his cheeks tattooed, his ears pierced, and his lips turned down. "He was a sailor by profession, native of Palos, and was considered by the Indians to be a man of great strength. It might have been about a year before that a squadron, consisting of three vessels, had touched at the promontory of Catoche

[1] Herrera, History, vol. ii. p. 173. [2] Bernal Diaz, c. xxix. p. 65.

(probably the expedition under Hernandez de Cordova), when Guerrero advised the inhabitants to commence hostilities[1]."

The account which he gave of himself greatly satisfied Cortes, who was well pleased to have thus secured another interpreter; and having now nothing further to detain him at Cozumel, he gave orders for the fleet to sail, and on the 4th of March, 1519, the expedition departed for the river Grijalva. They had some rough weather in rounding the *Punta de las Mugeres*, and boats were sent on shore at two or three different points, but Cortes himself appears not to have landed again on the coast of Yucutan.

[1] Bernal Diaz, *ibid.* Herrera adds some curious particulars respecting the temptations offered to Aguilar to break his vow of celibacy, which however he strenuously resisted, refusing constantly to follow the example of Guerrero. —History, vol. ii. pp. 173, 174.

CHAPTER III.

EXPEDITION OF CRISTOVAL DE OLID.—HIS INSUBORDINATION.—THE ARMAMENT OF LAS CASAS.—LAS CASAS MADE PRISONER BY OLID.—OLID TAKES POSSESSION OF NACO.—RESOLUTION OF CORTES TO MARCH TO HONDURAS.—PREPARATIONS FOR THE MARCH.—EQUIPMENT OF THE ARMY.—DEPARTURE OF CORTES FROM MEXICO.—SCENE BETWEEN CORTES AND THE FACTOR SALAZAR.—ARRIVAL OF THE ARMY AT GUACASUALCO.—INDIAN MAP OF THE ROUTE FROM XICALANGO.—ADVANCE UPON TUPILCO.—THE BRIDGES OF CORTES.—DIFFICULTIES OF THE MARCH.—ARRIVAL OF CORTES AT IZTAPA.—PRIVATIONS OF THE ARMY.—APPROACH TO THE MAYA COUNTRY.

FROM the period when Cortes departed from the river Grijalva, or Tabasco, to prosecute his designs on Mexico, until the year 1524,—an interval of more than five years,—the province of Yucatan remained unnoticed by the Spaniards.

The desire for conquest and the impulse of discovery tended constantly towards the south, as much in the expectation of finding the supposed passage between the Atlantic and the Pacific, as on the immediate reward which was derived from the occupation of the rich and fertile countries that bordered the latter ocean.

The fame of Cortes and the terror inspired by the exploits of his troops had wrought their effects in Soconusco, Chiapa, and Guatemala, and the inhabitants of those countries were eager at first to cultivate the good

graces of the conqueror, but their submission proved but short-lived. To reduce them to obedience, a force was sent, at the close of the year 1523, under Pedro de Alvarado, who penetrated beyond the limits of Guatemala, and during the expedition founded the city of that name, which he dedicated to Santiago[1].

In the previous year Nicaragua had been reached by Gil Gonzales de Avila, proceeding from the eastern coast of Costa Rica; and in April, 1523, an expedition was despatched from Vera Cruz by Cortes, the command of which was given to Cristoval de Olid, with instructions to examine the coast of Hibueras, or Honduras, and endeavour to find that passage to the Spice Islands, which was still the fixed idea of all the Spanish discoverers.

But Cristoval de Olid was unfaithful to his trust, and, having made common cause with Diego Velasquez and others who were opposed to Cortes, revolted from his authority, and, founding a town on the northern coast of Honduras, to which he gave the name of Triunfo de la Cruz, set up on his own account. As soon as Cortes became aware of this act of insubordination, he took instant measures for repressing it, and fitted out an armament of five vessels and a hundred men, which he placed under the orders of Francisco de las Casas, who received full powers to seize Olid, and put him in chains. Las Casas met with a determined resistance off the coast; his vessels were wrecked by a strong "norther[2]," thirty of his men were drowned, and he himself, with the remainder of his force, was made prisoner by Olid; nor were the troops released until they had taken a solemn oath never to desert him, but to oppose Cortes if he

[1] Herrera: History, vol. iii. p. 338.

[2] The local name for a northerly gale.

should come with an army against him[1]. As for Las Casas, he kept him a prisoner-at-war.

But Olid did not confine himself to acting merely on the defensive. Distrustful of all who acknowledged the authority of Cortes, he turned his arms against Gil Gonzales de Avila, who, on his return from the Lake of Nicaragua, had established the town of San Gil de Buena Vista, near Cape Three Points[1], a little to the eastward of the Gulf of Dulce. Olid was again victorious, making De Avila his prisoner also, and then marched into the interior of the country, where he discovered the vale of Naco, and took possession of the town bearing that name. What befell him afterwards will be adverted to when the termination is described of that extraordinary march which Cortes himself undertook for the re-establishment of his authority on the coast of Honduras.

Receiving no tidings of the expedition under Francisco de las Casas, though several months had elapsed since his departure, Cortes came to the resolution of proceeding in person to the scene of Olid's revolt, and, with the courage and promptitude which so eminently characterized him, determined upon striking a blow in a manner the most unexpected. "The more he thought," says Bernal Diaz, "of the many dangers to which vessels were exposed, and the various changes of good and bad fortune which are inseparable from an expedition of this nature, the more he regretted, notwithstanding the confidence be placed in Las Casas, that he had not gone in person at the head of the armament." But a circuitous route was little suited either to the object he had in view or to his own daring nature, and Cortes at once decided on the most direct course, an expedition by land, heedless

[1] Bernal Diaz. [2] Ibid., cap. clxxiii. p. 230.

of the perils which might attend the march of an army across a vast and unknown territory, peopled by races upon whose friendship it was impossible to reckon even if he had not to fear their hostility. But Cortes knew his mission. The extension of the power of his master the Emperor, and, simultaneously with that, the extension of the Roman Catholic faith, were objects he never lost sight of; and these, if not the main purpose, were at all events incidental to his project. Calmly therefore, and cheerfully, he set about his preparations. Amongst the many difficulties he had to contend with, the settlement of the government of Mexico on a secure basis during his absence was not amongst the least. The persons on whom he placed the greatest confidence were Alonso de Estrada, the Treasurer, and the Licentiate Alonso de Zuazo[1], to whom he confided his authority, associating with them Roderigo de Albornoz, the Accountant. The selection of the latter is much condemned by Bernal Diaz, who observes, "How he could make choice of him is quite beyond my speculation; but he certainly would not have done so had he been aware of the infamous manner in which Albornoz had slandered him to the Emperor;" and the event showed that Bernal Diaz had good reason for making this objection. The military defences of Mexico Cortes prepared himself, establishing them on the most ample footing; and the care of all religious matters he entrusted to the Franciscan Friar Toribio Motolinia and Father Olmedo, enjoining them to act in harmony, and assist each other in the conversion of the Indians and the maintenance of peace and order throughout the provinces, as well as in the city itself.

[1] Cortes calls him Alonso de Ayaco (*vide* Quinta Carta), but Bernal Diaz and Herrera give the name as in the text.

"In order, however, to deprive the discontented of the Indian population in the city and in the provinces of all possibility of choosing any leader of distinction, should they take it into their heads to rise up in arms during his absence, he took along with him Quauhtemoctzin (Guatemozin), besides the King of Tlacupa, and several others of the most distinguished caziques of the country, among whom the chief of Tapiéznela held the first rank, and even despatched a message to the caziques of Mechoacan, desiring them also to join his army[1]."

That army consisted of a hundred and fifty Spanish cavalry, an equal number of infantry, four pieces of artillery, and a force of three thousand Indians. His staff of officers was numerous and brilliant, including many of those who had served with most distinction in Mexico; and in his suite were pages and officers of his household, equerries, grooms, mule-drivers, falconers, musicians, and even a buffoon and a juggler. The entertainment of this motley retinue has been animadverted upon, as showing "more of the effeminacy of the Oriental satrap, than the hardy valour of a Spanish cavalier[2]." But to one who, like Cortes, never spared himself any toil or refrained from sharing any privation, the justice may be done of supposing that there was to the full as much policy in the display as indulgence in luxurious habits. It was calculated to leave on the minds of the people of Mexico the impression that he went forth secure in the success of his expedition; and the barbarous tribes through whose country he was to pass were not likely to esteem his power the less, on beholding the proofs of superior magnificence and civilization. For the religious wants of his army, and the propagation of the true

[1] Bernal Diaz. [2] Prescott: Conquest of Mexico, book vii. cap. 3.

faith amongst the Indians, he chose Father Juan de las Varillas, of Salamanca, and two Flemish monks, "who were professed theologians, and preached a good deal[1];" a surgeon and a physician were attached to the expedition; and the celebrated Doña Marina, who had been given to Cortes with a number of other women, by the caciques of Tabasco, before he left the river Grijalva for Mexico, acted, as she had long done in Mexico, as interpreter[2]; he was also accompanied as far as Guacasualco by the Royal Factor, Gonzalo de Salazar, and the Overseer Peralvides Chirinos[3]. To obtain supplies of fresh meat on his march, Cortes took with him a large herd of swine, sows as well as pigs, "these animals being very suitable for a long journey, on account of their endurance of fatigue, and because they multiply greatly[4]."

Thus provided and accompanied, Cortes set out from Mexico on the 12th of October, 1524, and Bernal Diaz, who served with the expedition, tells us that the splendour with which he was received in every township he came to, and the festivities which took place in his honour, were really astonishing. Dividing his army into two bodies, each of which took a separate route, he directed his march upon Guacasualco, or Espiritu Santo[5]; and on the way received a reinforcement of fifty men, who had but recently arrived from Spain, "all light-hearted, extravagant fellows[6]."

Bernal Diaz gives an amusing description of the obsequiousness of the Factor Salazar, "who, whenever he

[1] Bernal Diaz, vol. ii. p. 234.

[2] See Bernal Diaz, cap. xxxvii., for a curious account of Doña Marina; "whom," Cortes says, "he always took with him."—Quinta Carta, sect. xxv.

[3] In the Quinta Carta he is called Thirino.

[4] Gomara.

[5] Quinta Carta, sect. ii.

[6] Bernal Diaz.

addressed Cortes, bowed himself almost double, with his head uncovered," using every effort at the same time to induce him to forego his purpose of marching to Honduras; and he describes him as frequently singing the following couplet, as he rode by the side of Cortes:—

"Ay, tio, bolvámonos!
Ay, tio, bolvámonos!"

Then Cortes would laugh at him, and reply singing:—

"Adelante, mi sobrino! Adelante, mi sobrino!
Y no creais in agüeros, que será lo que Dios quisiere.
Adelante, mi sobrino!"

The Factor's desire for Cortes to return to Mexico arose from the jealousy he entertained of those who had been left in the exercise of authority; but finding that Cortes was firm of purpose, and not to be deterred from his object, he directed all his endeavours to induce Cortes to confer a share of the power on himself and the Overseer Chirinos. Bernal Diaz says that the persuasions of these two men succeeded in this respect; but Cortes, in his celebrated letter to the Emperor, accounts for the course he adopted on more solid and better grounds. While on the road to Guacasualco he received information that "between the Treasurer and the Accountant there was not that harmony which was necessary" for what concerned their offices and the charge he had given them; and he wrote to them, strongly reproving their dissensions, and warning them that if they did not agree, he would adopt such measures as would not please them. This threat he carried into execution after reaching Guacasualco, where he learnt that the disputes between his delegates had increased to such a degree, that the partisans of Estrada and Albornoz had even armed

themselves against each other. The course he took was to grant the Factor and Overseer an equal share in the administration of the government of Mexico, with the additional authority to suspend the Treasurer and Accountant from their charge if they thought it necessary; and believing that, by this division of power, he had ensured the tranquillity of the country he was leaving behind—though it turned out the very reverse—he directed all his thoughts to the immediate object of the expedition.

His first step in the prosecution of that object, on arriving at Guacasualco, was to despatch messengers to the caciques of Tabasco and Xicalango, desiring them to come and speak to him, or send trustworthy persons with whom he could confer on the nature of the country which he was about to traverse. "I spoke with them," he says, "of many things, on which I wished to be informed, concerning the country: they told me that on the sea-coast of the other side of the country, which they call Yucatan, was the bay called the Bay of the Assumption[1]; that there were certain Spaniards there, and that they did them much injury, as, besides burning many of their settlements, and killing some of their people,—for which reason many settlements had been deserted, and the inhabitants had fled from them to the mountains,—the merchants and dealers suffered another and still greater loss, because by reason of them had been lost the whole trade of that coast, which was considerable: and they gave me an account, as eye-witnesses, of almost all the towns on the coast, till you come to where

[1] The "Bay of Assumption," here mentioned, can scarcely mean the "Bay of Ascension," properly so called, at Chetumal; but the Indians may readily have confounded the latter with the Bay of Honduras, generally.

Pedrarias de Avila[1], his Majesty's Governor, was; and they made me a sketch on cloth of all that coast, from which it appeared to me that I could proceed along a great part of it, particularly to the place where they informed me the Spaniards were[2]."

Respecting the routes which were traced on these cloth maps, we have other particulars, given by Bernal Diaz and Gomara.

The former, speaking of the subsequent arrival of Cortes at Iztapa, says:—"Here Cortes also made the most minute inquiries of the caziques and Indian merchants, as to the route we were to take; for which purpose he laid before them a piece of *nequen* cloth he had brought with him from Guacagualco, and on which were noted down all the townships we had to pass through up to Huyacala. This place was termed by these Indians, Great Acala, in order to distinguish it from another, called Little Acala; and they assured us that the greater part of our route lay through a country of numerous rivers, and was intersected in various places by arms of the sea. Up to Tamaztebec alone, they said, which lay at a distance of three days' journey, we should have to pass no less than three rivers, and one estuary which was exceedingly broad[3]."

Gomara says that the cacique of Xicalango sent Cortes ten of the most notable persons of that city, "who, after having learnt his intentions, drew upon a cotton cloth the whole route from Xicalango, as far as Naco and Nito, and even to Nicaragua, which is situated on the South Sea. It was a fine thing to see; for on this

[1] Pedro Arias de Avila, the Governor, first of Darien, and afterwards of Panama.

[2] Carta Quinta, sect. ii.

[3] Bernal Diaz, vol. ii. p. 241.

cloth were painted all the streams, rivers, towns, and inns, at which the merchants of the countries lodged on their way to the fairs. These Indians were expert in painting, which painting serves instead of writing. Thus, when they wished to give an idea to any one of the movements of an army in their country, Indian or Spaniard, they figured in particular tissues the situation of the place, the men whom they had seen, and everything else, such as vessels, cannons, horses, dogs, and other objects[1]."

The encouraging accounts which he received (though they were far from being afterwards verified), and the indications thus afforded him, strengthened Cortes in the resolution he had taken to pursue his march; and after despatching a part of his force by sea to Tabasco, from whence he expected to obtain provisions and other things necessary, he commenced his journey, keeping in the first instance as near the coast as the marshy nature of the country would permit him. He first crossed the river Tunalan, at the town of that name[2], and another stream which he calls Yaguabulco[3], the men being ferried in canoes, and the horses swum over; but on reaching a third river, or rather estuary, on the western stream of which stands the modern town of Tupilco, it was found necessary to construct the first of those bridges which were such striking evidences of the energy and ability of Cortes, and which, Bernal Diaz observes, were so remarkable that, "subsequently, when all these provinces were subjected to the Spanish Crown, our countrymen

[1] Gomara: Histoire Générale des Indes Occidentales, traduite par le Sieur de Genillé, Mart. Fumée, cap. 66.

[2] The modern "Tonala." See Bailey's map of Central America, published by Saunders, Charing Cross, 1850.

[3] Probably the river that falls into Santa Ana Lagoon.

regarded them in astonishment, and exclaimed, *These are the bridges of Cortes!* in the same way as people say, *These are the columns of Hercules*[1]." Cortes himself remarks that this bridge "was 934 paces long, which was a wonderful thing to see." It was well for his army that Cortes was a practical engineer, for, though it was in the dry season, the province of Cupilcon (Tupilco) was so intersected by streams and marshes, that before he had traversed it,—and the distance was not more than twenty leagues,—he was obliged to construct no less than five hundred bridges[2]. Arrived at the frontier town of this province, Cortes pursued his route amidst increasing difficulties, till he came to "a very mighty river, called the Quecalapa, which is one of the tributaries that run into that of Tabasco[3];" and here he despatched messengers to the caciques of Tabasco, requesting that the supplies of provisions which he expected at that place, might be forwarded to him in canoes. After some little delay these supplies arrived, together with the Spaniards whom he had sent from Guacasualco, and two hundred Indians, by whose assistance the river was crossed, "without suffering any loss but the drowning of a black slave, and two loads of horse-shoes, which afterwards occasioned us some inconvenience[4]."

But the obstructions offered by natural impediments were not the only difficulties with which Cortes had to contend, for the further he proceeded, the more limited became the means of procuring good quarters and fresh provisions for his troops. Influenced by fear, and by the representations of these caciques, who viewed the

[1] Bernal Diaz, vol. ii. p. 260.
[2] Carta Quinta, sect. v.
[3] The modern name of the town at which Cortes arrived is Tacōtalpa, on the great river Tabasquillo.
[4] Carta Quinta, sect. vii.

expedition with jealousy, the Indians fled from their towns as he approached, carrying off everything portable or useful, and leaving nothing but burning ruins behind them; so that the distress which the army endured began already to be very great, and welcome indeed were even the patches of green maize which, here and there, had been left undestroyed.

From the "mighty river," of which Cortes had spoken, his course lay onward to Istapan (Istapa); but, uncertain of the right track, he sent forward a detachment of his men, under the guidance of an Indian whom he had captured, with instructions to write him an account of their journey, if they succeeded in reaching that place. From his own narrative we derive a very clear idea of the hardships that attended his march.

"After two days had passed," he says, "without receiving any letter from, or hearing any news of them, I was obliged to set out, on account of the distress we were in, and to follow their track without any other guide; which however was a tolerably distinguishable path. I followed the track which they had left through the marshes; and I assure Your Majesty that, between the highest ridges[1], the horses sank to the girths, though no one rode upon them, but they were led by the right hand. In this manner I proceeded for two days on the said track, without hearing any news of the people who had gone on before, and in great perplexity what to do, because to return seemed impossible, and of what lay before me I had no certain knowledge; but it pleased our Lord, who is wont to succour us in the greatest necessity, that when we were lodged in a field and the people were very sad, thinking that we all seemed to be

[1] *Sic* in MS.

then without help, the Indian inhabitants of this city of Temixtitan (Mexico), whom I brought with me, arrived with a letter, which the Spaniards whom I had sent on had written to me, in which they informed me that they had arrived at the village of Itzapan, and that, when they arrived there, the inhabitants kept their farms and women on the other side of a great river which ran close to the said village; and that in the said village there were many men, who at first believed that our people could not pass a great lake which was near; but that when they saw how they swam with their horses across the lake, the Indians began to set fire to the village, but the Spaniards made such haste that they did not allow them to burn any of it; and that the whole people took to the river, and crossed it in several canoes which they had, though many were drowned in their haste, and seven or eight of them were taken prisoners, amongst whom was one who appeared to be their chief, and him they detained till my arrival. So great was the joy that all my people felt from this letter, that I cannot express it to Your Majesty, since, as I have mentioned before, they despaired almost of help; and the next day I pursued my journey by the track, and the Indians who had brought me the letter, guiding me, I arrived late at the village, where I found all the people who had gone before very joyful, because they had discovered much maize and *yuca* (cassava), and *ages*, a production on which the natives of the islands feed, and which is pretty good. On my arrival I caused to be brought before me the inhabitants who had been captured, and asked them, through the interpreter whom I brought, the reason why they thus burned all their own houses and villages, and deserted them, seeing that I had done no harm

or injury to any of them, but, on the contrary, gave of what I had to those who staid for me; and they replied, that the Cacique of Cuagatan had come there in a canoe, and induced them to burn and desert their dwellings[1]."

By the assurances which Cortes gave of his pacific intentions he succeeded, in a great degree, in calming the apprehensions of the Indians, though the promises which they made him could never be implicitly relied on, neither could absolute reliance be placed on the information they supplied. This was shown on the road to Tamuztupec, to reach which place the caciques had volunteered the construction of bridges and a supply of canoes; "but," says Bernal Diaz, "our Indian friends deceived us in every way." The account which he gives of the toils and privations of the expedition at this part of their journey is worth extracting.

"We were therefore compelled to set to work ourselves, to construct bridges sufficiently strong to carry our horses; even officers and soldiers set diligently to work in felling the heavy trees, and dragging them to the river-side, in all of which we were greatly assisted by the Mexican warriors. Three days were spent in the construction of this bridge, during which time we had nothing to subsist upon but grass, and a wild root called by the Indians *quecucuque*, which burnt our lips and tongues. After having with great difficulty safely crossed this broad estuary[2], our further progress was impeded by an almost impenetrable barrier of thickets and woods, through which we were obliged to cut a road with our swords. In this way we continued to move

[1] Carta Quinta, sect. x.

[2] This word is inapplicable so far inland; a lake perhaps is meant.

forward in a straight line, in the hopes of reaching some township. One morning, as usual, when we had again commenced marching forward in this laborious manner, Cortes himself began to find that our position was truly miserable. He could not help hearing how the men murmured against him and cursed the whole expedition, and witnessing the terrible hunger they sustained; uttering aloud that he ought immediately to march back to Mexico, if at least he was not desirous of starving us to death. To all this suffering was added, that we saw nothing before us but terrific mountains[1], which almost hid the very heavens from our view. Though some of us climbed to the very tops of the highest trees, all we could see was one huge pile of mountains frowning above the other on every side. Besides this, two of our Indian guides had secretly decamped, and the third was so ill that he was unable to move along, and had so far lost his recollection that he could give us no information as to which way we were to bend our steps. But as Cortes was a man who never shrank back from any difficulty, and whose active mind was never at a loss, he ordered the pilot, Pedro Lopez, to bring him the compass, which he placed on our map of nèquen cloth above mentioned, and then desired him to point out the direction we were to take, in order to reach the nearest township. In accordance with Lopez's instructions, we commenced cutting our way through the woods in an easterly direction, and moved up the mountains[2]." It was at this period that Cortes' buffoon and three soldiers, who had recently arrived from Spain, died from exhaustion. The privations of the men were, doubtless,

[1] Probably the range which divides the valley of the Usumasinta from Chiapa.

[2] Bernal Diaz, vol. ii. p. 242.

very great, but it is impossible to avoid smiling at the following quaint description of the old Conquistador.

"Our distress was so great that even the performers on the sackbut, clarion, and dulcimer, who were constantly to have amused us with their instruments, the only hard work they had to do, fell ill for want of food, and so an end was put to their music. There was only one of them who managed to force out a tune now and then, but we all grew so sick of his blowing and puffing that we told him it sounded in our ears like the mingled howls of foxes and wolves, and that a handful of maize to stay the cravings of hunger would be more acceptable than all his music."

The places which both Cortes and Bernal Diaz name between Istapan and the country of the Maya Indians, which the expedition was now approaching, are not to be found on any known map[1]; but at the town or village which the former calls Tatahuitalpan, the "deep river" on which it stood was in all likelihood the Usumasinta, of whose course, till it falls into the Mexican Gulf, Cortes took advantage to communicate with the vessels that were waiting at Tabasco for final instructions. He says, "I sent three Spaniards down this river to the river of Tabasco, because this is the principal stream which flows into it, where the caravels were to wait to be informed what was to be done; and by these Spaniards I sent orders to the caravels, to proceed along the whole coast till they doubled the point called Yucatan, and arrived at Ascension Bay, because there they would find me, or I would send them orders what to do; and I commanded the Spaniards, who went in these canoes, to bring me in

[1] See note on this subject in Prescott's account of the March of Cortes, Book vii. cap. 3.

these and other canoes as much provisions as they could find in Tabasco and Xicalango, up a great lake which goes from the province of Acalan, and is forty leagues distant from Yztapan, and that I would wait for them there."

But before we accompany Cortes into Mayapan, the intermediate country between Guatemala and Yucatan, it may be desirable to speak of the nation of the Itzaex, and the various tribes of Indians who then inhabited it.

CHAPTER IV.

TRADITION OF THE ITZAEX.—THEIR ROMANTIC HISTORY.—PROPHESIED ARRIVAL OF THE SPANIARDS.—DOUBTFUL AUTHORITY FOR THE PROPHECIES.—FURTHER DIFFICULTIES OF CORTES.—DANGEROUS POSITION OF THE ARMY.—THE TROOPS MURMUR.—ANOTHER BRIDGE CONSTRUCTED.—DÈCEIT OF APOSPALAN.—INDIAN IDOLS BROKEN AT TITACAL.—INTERVIEW OF CORTES WITH APOSPALAN.—THE CONSPIRACY OF GUATEMOZIN.—THE PLOT REVEALED BY MEXICALCINCO.—EXECUTION OF GUATEMOZIN.—SIMPLICITY OF THE MEXICANS.—CORTES REACHES MAZATLAN.—THE PASS OF ALABASTER.—ARRIVAL AT THE LAKE OF ITZA.

THE people amongst whom the fortunes of Cortes and his army were now to be hazarded, consisted of a number of independent Indian tribes, bearing many different designations.

Of these the most important was the nation of the Itzaex, who, according to their own traditions, had emigrated from the northern part of Yucatan about a hundred years before the discovery of that province by the Spaniards. Two causes are assigned for this emigration, one of them savouring of the romance of old Spain, the other bearing the impress of her religion; but implicit belief can attach to neither.

The romantic account of the retreat of the Itzaex is as follows.

The form of government of Yucatan (anciently called

Maya or Mayapan) was originally monarchical, the chief authority being vested in one sole and absolute King[1]. But, in the course of time, the ambition of the more powerful vassals led to the disruption of this kingdom, and it became divided into various petty states, a nominal allegiance being all that was paid to the former ruler with the comparatively small province of Mani.

Amongst these independent chiefs was one called Canek, who was enamoured of the bride of another cacique, and, having no other means of preventing the marriage, seized upon her by force on the wedding-day, and bore her off in triumph. The Indian Menelaus, determined on punishing the abductor and recovering his bride, for this purpose assembled his warriors; and his preparations being as formidable as his power was great, the dread of his vengeance induced Canek to fly before it, and, abandoning his own territory of Chichen-Itzá, he took refuge with his people in the rugged and impenetrable mountain districts that formed the intermediate country between Yucatan and Guatemala, and there established the nation of the Itzaex[2].

This story Villagutierre doubts, preferring the version which identified the Exodus of the Itzaex with a religious motive[3]. His statement is that, about the period already referred to, the idolatrous priests of Chichen-Itzá prophesied the arrival of the Spaniards in their country, counselling that they should be welcomed as guests and as the teachers of a purer faith, but that the Itzalanos received these warnings in bad part, and preferred immediate emigration to threatened conversion.

[1] Cogolludo: Historia de Yucathan, Conquista de el Itza, lib. ii. cap. 1. (Madrid, 1701.)

[2] Cogolludo, lib. ix. c. 14.

[3] Villagutierre, lib. i. cap. vi. p. 34.

The operation of a cause like this is not more probable than that resulting from the adventure of Canek, but the account is worth dwelling upon at greater length, owing to the form in which it has been produced.

Villagutierre, who supports his assertion by the authority of Herrera, Remesal, Torquemada, Solozano, and others, enters very minutely into the subject. He says:

"One of these heathen priests was Patzin Yaxun, *and these were the words of his prophecy.* 'The word of God has been announced upon earth: wait for it, for it will come, his priests will bring it to you. Take heed to their words and their divine preaching: blessed shall they be who receive it! O Itzalans! abhor your gods, forget them, for they will come to an end: let all adore the God of truth, for he is all-powerful, for he is the Creator of all things.' Thus spoke this idolater to his nation, and it would seem impossible that he could more clearly announce to them the spiritual change of that kingdom and of their rites and priesthood, persuading them to wait for the true law and to receive it, detesting the adoration of gods who he told them were perishable, a thing totally repugnant to the being of a true God. The high-priest Nahau Tec went still further than Patzin Yaxun, and fixed the time, saying, 'When, by the mercy of the Omnipotent, the sun shall shine the brightest, four ages hence will come they who are to bring you the tidings of God. I earnestly enjoin you, O Itzalanos! to wait upon your guests when they come, for they are the fathers of the land.' . . . . With a very opposite feeling did the old idolatrous priest Ahkukil-Chal look upon the conversion of these infidels: thus ran his prophecy: 'You who look at things to come, what think you will happen at the end of the present age? Know

that from all parts of the north and east such things will come for our woe: that you may think they are before your eyes I tell you, that in the ninth age no priest or prophet will declare to you the Scripture which you are generally ignorant of.'"

Villagutierre's reasoning on the meaning of these alleged prophecies may be passed over, to give the last of the series, which he considers more precise than the rest.

"Chilan-Balam, High Priest of Tixcacayon Cabick, in Mani, prophesied the coming of the Spaniards to those countries more fully than the others, saying: 'At the end of the thirteenth age, when Itza is at the height of its power, as also the city called Tancah, which is between Yacman and Tichaquillo (now called Ichpaa, which means castle and fortress), the signal of God will appear on the heights; and the Cross, with which the world was enlightened, will be manifested. There will be variance of men's will in future times, when this signal shall be brought. Ye priests, before coming even a quarter of a league, ye shall see the Cross, which will appear and lighten up the sky from pole to pole. The worship of vain gods shall cease. Your father comes, O Itzalanos! Your brother comes, O Tantunites! Receive your barbarous bearded guests from the East, who bring the signal of the God who comes to us in mercy and pity. The time of our life is coming. You have nothing to fear from the world. Thou art the living God, who created us in mercy. The words of God are good: let us lift up his signal, to see it and adore it: we must raise the Cross in opposition to the falsehood we now see. Before the first tree (*arbol*) of the world now is a manifestation made to the world: this is the

signal of a God on high: adore this, ye people of Itza! let us adore it with uprightness of heart. Let us adore him who is our God, the true God: receive the word of the true God, for he who speaks to you comes from heaven. Ponder this well, and be the men of Itza. They who believe shall have light in the age which is to come. I, your teacher and master, Balam, warn and charge you to look at the importance of my words. Thus have I finished what the true God commanded me to say, that the world might hear it.'"

With no desire to discredit the announcement of this impending conversion, few, we imagine, can read the terms in which it is conveyed without some suspicion as to their origin; and whether a vague intimation of coming change had been given or not, the scriptural character of the language employed must at least indicate that the priests of Itza were not unassisted in their prophetic warnings, more particularly when we find that Father Bartolomeo de Fuensalida, a Franciscan monk, "who, years afterwards, went to various parts of this country[1]," tells exactly the same story.

Such, from whatever source derived, were the alleged traditions of the Itzäex, who, in the intercourse which took place between Cortes and themselves, appear to have manifested no repugnance to the reception of that faith whose propagation was a material part of his mission.

But before he arrived at the more civilized part of the country, where friendly communications were exchanged, Cortes had greater difficulties to encounter than any he had yet met with. Forests were traversed, where the density of the foliage was such that the Spaniards could scarcely see where to set their feet, and the only means

[1] Villagutierre, p. 38.

of extrication from these labyrinths was the mariner's compass, which Cortes was ever anxiously consulting to keep in his course towards the east. At length, when, as Prescott says, "the troops emerged from these dismal forests, their path was crossed by a river of great depth, and far wider than any they had hitherto traversed." If this obstruction were really a river, it was most probably the Usumasinta; but Cortes himself describes it as a lake, after speaking of a river, the passage of which had given him considerable trouble; and we are disposed to think that the great difficulty occurred after the Usumasinta had been left behind.

"After crossing this river," continues Cortes, "I sent on a company of foot-soldiers with the guides, to make the road, and I came after them with the rest of the people, and, having proceeded for three days by some very steep mountains along a very narrow path, I came upon a great lake more than five hundred paces in breadth, and tried to find a passage at the bottom and at the head of it, but could not do so, and the guides told me it was in vain to look for it, and that there remained five days' journey to the mountains[1]."

How to overcome this obstacle was the question: there were no canoes, and the extremities of the lake were impassable, owing to the deep swamps and entangled roots of trees, "so that," says Cortes, "unless by flying, it was useless to think of getting the horses across." To return was equally impossible, on account of the many torrents, the labour of reconstructing bridges, the exhaustion of the men, and the want of provisions. In this extremity however a small canoe was found, and by means of it Cortes caused the whole of the lake to be

[1] Carta Quinta.

sounded, tying lances together for the purpose. In this manner he ascertained that, besides the depth of water, which was four fathoms, there were two fathoms more of mud, so that his only resource was to build another bridge, a stupendous undertaking, which however he did not shrink from.

"I ordered them to divide the wood according to their measures, which were nine or ten fathoms, together with that which was to be out of the water, and I requested the Indian caciques immediately to cut and carry it, according to the number of people each had brought with him. The Spaniards, and I with them, then began to prepare the rafts, with the assistance of the small canoe, and of two others which we afterwards found; and such was the nature of the work thus commenced that it seemed to us a thing impossible to finish, and the men even said so behind my back, murmuring at me, and declaring that it would be better to turn back, before they became tired or were prevented returning by hunger, and because, after all, the work could not be finished, and we should have to return perforce. And these murmurs spread through all the people in such a manner that they almost dared to utter them to my face; and when I saw them so dispirited (and, in truth, not without reason, for it seemed impossible to finish our task, and they were disheartened and inactive, as they had nothing now to eat but the roots of plants), I commanded the Spaniards not to have anything to do with the bridge, for that I could make it with the Indians; and I immediately called the caciques together, and showed them the strait we were in, and how necessary it was to pass the lake or perish there of hunger[1]."

[1] Quinta Carta, sect. xvi.

To stimulate the exertions of the Indians, Cortes spoke of the abundance of the great province of Acalan, on the opposite side of the lake, and of the rewards which he should bestow upon them, and in the Emperor's name, on their return to Mexico. His eloquence and his example prevailed. They promised, one and all, to labour even to death, and set to work with so much energy that the bridge was completed in four days, and the men and horses crossed safely over it. But even then the passage was not effected, for beyond the lake was a great marsh "fully two bow-shots broad, and the most terrible thing the people ever saw, in which all the horses sank, even when unsaddled, up to the ears, so that no other part of them appeared, and when they endeavoured to get out they sank still deeper, so that we altogether lost hope of saving a single horse; but for all that we tried, placing bundles of grass and large branches beneath them, on which they might support themselves without sinking, and thus they were somewhat relieved." Eventually a narrow passage was made through the marsh, and the horses were got through without loss, though "when they came out they were so tired that they could scarcely keep their feet[1]."

These difficulties surmounted,—and their magnitude can scarcely be calculated,—the exertions of Cortes were rewarded by the re-appearance of the Spaniards who had been sent into Acalan. In their company came eighty Indians[2] laden with fowls, fruit, and maize-bread, and the bearers also of a friendly message from Apospalan, the Cacique of Acalan. This greeting was renewed a few days afterwards at a town where Cortes halted, called by him Ticatepel, where the son of Apospalan

[1] Quinta Carta, sect. xvii. [2] Herrera. Cortes says eight hundred.

made his appearance with a present of provisions and some gold, announcing at the same time the death of his father. This statement Cortes rightly supposed to be untrue, but he "pretended to be much grieved" at the news, and gave him a necklace of Flemish beads which he wore round his neck; the young cacique received it with much thankfulness, and staid with Cortes for two days of his own accord[1].

Cortes had not advanced much further, before he was given to understand, what he had previously suspected, that Apospalan was still alive; but before he obtained an interview with that cacique, a circumstance occurred in a town called Fentiacas[2], or Ticatal[3], which affords an illustration of the religious observances of the Itzaex. The town contained some beautiful temples,—of the same kind, no doubt, as the splendid remains at Palenque,—and in two of these, where the Spaniards were lodged, a number of idols were broken to pieces by the visitors, which gave occasion to Cortes to exhort the Indians, through his interpreter Marina, to abandon their false gods and accept the true faith. All the accounts concur in stating that the Indians adhered to their religion with no very great fervour, but were quite willing to listen to a creed which prohibited the shedding of blood, for such was that of the Itzaex.

"I learnt," says Cortes, "that the principal temple in which we lodged, was dedicated to a goddess in whom they placed great faith and trust, and to whom they sacrificed none but virgins, who must be very beautiful; and if they were not so, the goddess was very angry with them, and for this reason they always took care to look for such, with whom their goddess might be satisfied;

[1] Quinta Carta, sect. xvii. [2] Ibid. sect. xviii. [3] Herrera.

and those whom they found when young, who were beautiful, they brought up apart and kept for the purpose of this sacrifice[1]."

After this occurrence Apospalan himself appeared, and, excusing the subterfuge of his son, which he said had its origin in fear of the Spaniards, gave Cortes a hearty welcome to the city of Yzancanac, where he resided. The nature of his dignity is thus described by Herrera[2].

"It was the custom in this Province of Acalan to choose the wealthiest merchant for their lord, and such was Apospalan, who drove a great trade in cotton, cacao, slaves, salt, and gold, but alloyed with copper and other mixtures, as also in red snails they wore as an ornament, rosin, perfumes for the temples, hearts of pine-trees to light them, colours and dyes to paint themselves in time of war and on festivals, and to defend themselves against the heat and cold, besides other commodities; and accordingly he had factors in several towns where fairs were kept."

It was while halting in Yzancanac that the necessity arose for that act, the commission of which by Cortes has been the subject of so much censure: this was the formal execution of Guatemozin, of the cacique of Tacuba, and of other Mexican chiefs whom Cortes had brought with him on his march, for a conspiracy to murder him and all his followers. Of the nature of the conspiracy itself there appears to be little doubt[3], the only question being whether the extreme severity of Cortes

[1] Quinta Carta, sect. xviii.

[2] General History, vol. iii. p. 360.

[3] Prescott however places no faith in the story of the conspiracy, but expresses his belief that Cortes was desirous to get rid of Guatemozin, because he found him "a troublesome and indeed formidable captive."—History of the Conquest of Mexico, vol. iii. p. 255.

can admit of justification. Bernal Diaz loudly condemns his General; and Gomara, the chaplain, disapproves of the act; but when it is considered that Cortes was in the heart of a country whose inhabitants were far more likely to sympathize with the Mexicans than with the Spaniards, and that clemency on his part might have been taken for irresolution, and thus have led to the destruction of the whole expedition, the plea of necessity may fairly be offered as the excuse for his policy. The painful circumstances under which it took place were these.

Amongst the Mexican chiefs who swelled the train of Cortes, was one named Mexicalcinco, to whom, in conjunction with others, it was proposed by Guatemozin and the Cacique of Tacuba, who were in correspondence with the disaffected that had been left behind, to take advantage of the isolated position of Cortes and the exhausted condition of the Spaniards, and, after putting them all to death, march back upon Mexico, and recover both the capital and the kingdom.

According to the Mexican custom of symbolizing their acts prospectively, as well as of the past, the conspirators had pictured their designs on one of their painted cloths, on which were represented not only the victims of the intended massacre, but the principal actors in it. Mexicalcinco, who afterwards became a Christian, and was baptized under the name of Christopher, either did not share in the feelings of his countrymen, or held the Spaniards in too much awe to attempt anything against them; and, going one night very secretly to Cortes, revealed the whole of the plot[1], showing him the hieroglyphical drawing, and explaining all the details as well

[1] Quinta Carta, sect. xxi.

as he was able. The danger was imminent, and Cortes met it promptly, as was his custom. At daybreak on the following morning he arrested all the Mexican chiefs whom he had brought with him, and placing them apart from each other, went and questioned each by himself, giving every prisoner to understand that his fellow had made some revelation; by which means he obtained a full confession and confirmation of the meditated conspiracy, the guilt of which was thrown however upon Guatemozin and the Cacique of Tacuba, who had originated the plot, to which the rest said they had listened, but not consented. The proceedings of Cortes were brief and stern; "I immediately," he says, "ordered them (Guatemozin and the Cacique of Tacuba) to be hung, and they were hung accordingly; and the rest I ordered to be set at liberty, because it did not seem to me that they were otherwise guilty than in having listened to it, though that was sufficient to deserve death; but their cases remained open, for each to see that he might yet be punished; though," he adds, "I believe they are so frightened (for they have never discovered from whom I learnt the plot), that I do not think they will ever revolt again[1]."

The simple Mexicans—too simple for successful conspirators—had no idea that treachery had been at work in their councils, but ascribed the discovery to magic, by whose aid nothing was hidden, they thought, from Cortes; and they rested their belief upon the fact, that by means of his instruments, the chart and mariner's compass, he had been able to conduct his army through the untravelled wilds of Yucatan. So impressed indeed were they with this notion, that, to convince Cortes they

[1] Quinta Carta, sect. xxi.

were well inclined towards him, and that he might learn their good intentions, "they besought me earnestly to look into the glass and the chart, and there we should see their goodwill towards me, and," he quietly observes, "I also induced them to suppose that this was the truth, and that in that compass and chart I saw and knew and could discover all things[1]."

Guatemozin and the Cacique of Tacuba met their deaths with firmness and dignity, the courage of the king never yielding before the extremity of torture that he was made to suffer, "Gehenna" though it was, the soles of his feet being rubbed with oil and placed before a fire, "to induce him to confess his treason, and declare where the treasure of Montezuma was concealed[2]." The last words he uttered were addressed to Cortes; "I knew what it was," he said, "to trust to your false promises, Malintzin; I knew that you had destined me to this fate, since I did not fall by my own hand when you entered my city of Tenochtitlan. Why do you slay me so unjustly? God will demand it of you[3]."

From Yzancanac, which was the capital of the province of Acalan, Cortes pursued his route across a level but thickly wooded country, until he arrived at Mazatlan, the chief town of the province of the same name. He describes it as perched upon a lofty rock, and, besides the natural defences formed by a deep river, which at this point expanded to a lake surrounding the town, very strongly fortified, after the manner of the country, by formidable stockades. But there were no defenders, nor even inhabitants, all having fled at the approach of the Spaniards. They had however left quantities of

[1] Quinta Carta, sect. xxi.
[2] Gomara, cap. lxix. p. 143. A.
[3] Bernal Diaz.

provisions behind, the discovery of which was a source of great satisfaction to Cortes.

The province of Tayaco was next traversed, and after the usual fashion, by sending out parties in front of the main body to reconnoitre, capturing such stray Indians as they might fall in with, and by their friendly assurances disarming suspicion and obtaining guides. Deserts too were passed, one of which, Cortes says, took him five days to cross; the way was rough and infested with wild beasts, and in one place, to which he gives the name of "Puerto de Alabastro," the stony nature of the soil greatly impeded his progress. But as he approached the great lake of the Itzaex, the character of the country improved, and the deer became so numerous and were so tame that the horsemen rode up to them and speared them quite at ease. To account for their numbers and tameness, the Indian guides informed the strangers that the animals were looked upon by the people of that country as their gods, for their chief idol had appeared to them in that form, and commanded that the deer should not be frightened or killed. "In that deer-hunt," relates Villagutierre, "the horse of a cousin of Cortes, called Palacios Rubios, fell dead, and another horse, belonging to Cortes himself, which he prized exceedingly, was taken very ill; for with the running and spearing the deer, they sweated to exhaustion. But the horse of Cortes did not then die. *It would have been better,*" he gravely continues, "*if he had*[1]."

It was now that Cortes, having advanced so far eastward, became anxious to learn if he were approaching the coast, where he expected to meet with Cristoval de Olid; and his inquiries of the Indians, if bearded men

[1] Villagutierre, lib. i. cap. 7.

like himself and his Spanish followers had been seen by them, were frequent. At length he received replies in the affirmative; but the position of his countrymen was only very vaguely indicated, and seemed by the words and gestures of those he questioned to be still remote. But whether they were far or near, Cortes had no choice: an onward course was all that remained to him, and with the same patient and enduring spirit that had sustained him throughout this perilous journey he gradually drew near the Lake of Itza, and halted upon its shores.

CHAPTER V.

DESCRIPTION OF THE LAKE OF ITZA.—ACCOUNT GIVEN BY AN INDIAN CAPTIVE OF THE CITY OF TAYASAL.—COURTEOUS RECEPTION BY CORTES OF THE ITZALAN CHIEFS.—INTERVIEW BETWEEN CANEK AND CORTES.—OFFER OF CANEK TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN.—FRIENDLY INTERCOURSE BETWEEN THE SPANIARDS AND THE ITZAEX.—VISIT OF CORTES TO TAYASAL.—CORTES LEAVES HIS HORSE IN THE CITY.—ITS DEATH AND DEIFICATION.—DEPARTURE OF CORTES FOR THE SOUTH-WEST.—PASSAGE OF THE MOUNTAIN OF FLINTS.—LOSSES AND SUFFERINGS OF THE TROOPS.—DANGEROUS FORD.—SCARCITY OF PROVISIONS.—CORTES REACHES THE PROVINCE OF ACUCULIN.—TIDINGS OF "THE BEARDED MEN."—CAPTURE OF NITO BY SANDOVAL.—CLOSE OF THE MARCH OF CORTES.

THE extent of the Lake of Itza was so vast, and its depth so great, that when the runners who preceded the main body of the army first discovered it, they believed that they had reached an arm of the sea; and, although the water was fresh, Cortes himself was at first inclined to this opinion. Having halted his troops at a distance from the lake, he went forward on foot to reconnoitre, and coming up with the scouts learnt that, by means of a dog which was with them, they had succeeded in capturing an Indian who had just landed from his canoe.

One of the great objects of his march being to advance as secretly as possible, Cortes questioned the Indians very closely as to whether anything were known

of his approach; and, receiving a negative answer, proceeded to inquire the best way to reach a large town that stood on an island in the lake, and whose white walls and lofty temples were visible at a considerable distance. The Indian told him that there was no direct approach on that side, but offered to conduct him by another route, as far as a small arm of the lake, to a village where some canoes might be found to enable him to effect a passage to the island. Cortes accepted the proposal, and, accompanied by ten or twelve archers, set out with the Indian, who guided them by the shore of the lake till they reached the inlet, across which they contrived to wade, though the water was up to their waists and sometimes above it. It was impossible however to advance so cautiously as not to be seen by the inhabitants of the village, who, when the Spaniards came in sight, pushed off at once in their canoes into the broadest part of the lake, before their flight could be stopped. Finding that no further progress could then be made, Cortes sent back word for the army to move forward, and encamped them in the deserted village. They did not fare so badly here, for there were fields of maize in plenty, and the lake afforded them fish, though Bernal Diaz grumbles at its quality. "Along this township," he says, "lay a freshwater lake of considerable extent, which abounded with large fish covered with sharp prickles, very much resembling the *disgusting-looking and insipid* fish called the shad. By means of a few old cloaks and tattered nets, which we found in the deserted habitations, we dragged the lake from one end to the other, and succeeded in taking above a thousand of *these ugly fish*[1]."

[1] Bernal Diaz, vol. ii.

Cortes now interrogated the Indian captive afresh, who, being himself reassured by the amicable declaration of the Spanish leader, informed him that he was well known to the cacique of the island, and, if permitted to depart, would be the bearer of any message that Cortes wished to send; he added, that the name of the cacique was Canek, that the city he dwelt in was called Tayasal, and that the island on which it stood, which gave its name to the lake, was known as Peten. Cortes judged it expedient to accede to the Indian's request, and the confidence he reposed in him was not misplaced; for towards midnight he returned, and with him were two persons of distinction from the city, whom Canek had sent to learn what it was the strangers desired[1].

Cortes received the Itzalan chiefs with great courtesy, and told them that he had come to explore their country by the command of his Emperor, on whose power and magnificence he greatly dilated, and that he was desirous of cultivating the most friendly understanding with their cacique; to prove which, and at the same time to induce Canek to lay aside all apprehension, he dismissed them with a Spanish soldier, whom he sent as a hostage and pledge for his good intentions, begging that Canek would himself come to visit him.

This frank conduct of Cortes was met by equal confidence on the part of the cacique of the Itzaex, who on the following day arrived in the camp of the Spaniards, attended by about thirty chiefs, and followed by a number of Zumaguales, as the common people were called. "Canek," says Cortes, "brought with him the Spaniard whom I had sent to remain with him as a hostage, and appeared to come very willingly, and was

[1] Quinta Carta, sect. xxv.

received by me with great kindness[1]." After the first ceremonies of the interview were past, Cortes, desirous to impress his guest with a sense of the solemnity of the faith whose propagation was co-extensive with Spanish conquest, caused an altar to be erected, before which High Mass was performed by the priests, assisted by the choristers and clarion-players who accompanied the expedition.

"Canek heard mass with very deep attention, and looked closely at the ceremonies, ornaments, and services of the altar, and apparently was much pleased with it; he praised the music very much, and said he had never heard anything like it, and the Indians who came with him seemed stupefied with astonishment at what they saw and heard[2]."

When this ceremonial was over one of the monks preached a sermon, which was interpreted to Canek as carefully as it might be. It set forth the principal articles of the Christian religion, and dwelt forcibly on the fact of there being but one God, to whom only all obedience was due; and it operated so effectually that Canek announced his intention of destroying all the idols which were worshiped by himself and his people, and promised to do so at once, in the presence of Cortes, if he would go back with him to Tayasal.

But before he signified his assent to this proposition, Cortes deemed it advisable to ensure the temporal as well as the spiritual submission of Canek. He accordingly harangued him with much dignity and eloquence, "speaking with great clearness of the Emperor Charles V., of his exceeding greatness, his deeds, dominions, and his sovereign and mighty power, earnestly

[1] Quinta Carta, sect. xxv. [2] Villagutierre, lib. i. cap. viii.

and affectionately entreating and persuading him to become his vassal, as the lords of the great kingdom of Mexico and many others were already. Canek replied that he submitted to such vassalage, and that, some years ago, the people of Tabasco, in passing through his country to the great fairs, told him that certain strangers, like the soldiers of Cortes, had come to their territory, and that they fought bravely, for they defeated the men of Tabasco in three battles. Cortes told him that he was the captain of those strangers whom the people of Tabasco had spoken of, and that he had conquered and subdued them. After this they sat down to dinner, which was prepared with the pomp and splendour requisite to inspire those Indians with a due awe of Cortes, and to make them esteem him as if he were their king. Canek ordered his Indians to bring from their canoes birds, fishes, cakes, honey, a small quantity of gold, and strings of round coloured shells which are much prized by the Indians. They ate their dinner; and Cortes gave Canek a shirt, a black velvet cap, and various little things in steel, such as knives and scissors. Cortes again asked Canek for certain Spaniards of his, who, he said, must be on the sea-coast at no great distance from thence. To which Canek replied, that he had news of them, and that he would give him a guide to take him where they were, without missing the road, though it was a very bad one, owing to the great mountains, the rivers, and the marshes it led across, but the way by sea was more easy. Cortes told him that he would thankfully accept the guide, and that the horses could not go in the Indian boats, to pass the lake and pursue their march. Canek said that he would have to keep near the lake only for three leagues, and that, whilst the army

went by land, Cortes should go with him to his city, and see the idols burnt[1]."

On the renewal of Canek's invitation Cortes at once expressed his willingness to accept it, though he was earnestly counselled not to do so by his principal captains, who looked upon it as an act of the most daring temerity and misplaced confidence; but the fearless leader was not to be dissuaded from his purpose, and, taking with him thirty crossbowmen, Cortes embarked with Canek and his Indians for the island city, with its numerous houses and lofty temples shining brightly in the sun at the distance of two leagues. The Spaniards were received in Tayasal with great welcome and loud rejoicing, Canek exerting himself to the utmost of his power in doing honour to Cortes, whom he presented with several mantles and some gold, though the metal was but of inferior quality. But what was of as much interest to Cortes as the friendly reception which he experienced was the information he obtained in the city respecting those he had come so far in search of. He learnt from the Indians that there were two towns of "bearded men" (Spaniards), one called Nito, on the northern coast of Honduras, and the other Naco, situated further inland; and though he was told by Canek that a very rugged country lay between him and the places that were spoken of, the prospect of accomplishing the great object of his toilsome march inspired him with fresh courage to encounter the obstacles which still intervened.

While Cortes was paying this visit to Canek the army resumed its march along the borders of the lake, not wholly free from disquietude at his absence, lest treachery should have been practised against him; but to-

[1] Villagutierre, lib. i. cap. 8.

wards evening their fears were dissipated by seeing him return to Tayasal with his crossbowmen, and a *cortége* of Indians headed by their cacique.

He here took leave of Canek and the Indians who accompanied him to the mainland, and entrusted them with the care of his horse Morzillo, which had been lamed; charging them to take great care of it, and attend to its recovery, as he prized it very highly, and telling them that when he had found the Spaniards he was in search of, he should send for his steed again. It was from no want of care on the part of the Itzaex, but rather from an excess of it, that Morzillo lost his life under their management; for in their anxiety to effect a cure, and regarding the animal as one endowed with reason, they gave him poultry and other meat to eat, and presented him with bunches of flowers, as they were accustomed to do to persons of rank when they were sick; a species of attention somewhat similar to that which the fool laughed at in 'King Lear,' when he speaks of the cockney who, "in pure kindness to his horse, buttered his hay." The consequence of this unaccustomed style of medical treatment was that Morzillo languished and died, and then a worse evil befell, for, observes the pious Villagutierre, "though some people say Canek burnt his idols in the presence of Cortes, there was, in reality, no burning of idols or anything else in that city of Tayasal; on the contrary, by leaving the horse with those infidel Itzaex, they obtained a greater and still more abominable idol than the many they had before[1]." The meaning of this sentence is subsequently explained by the worthy chronicler informing us that, on the death of Morzillo, the Itzaex raised its effigy "in stone and

[1] Villagutierre, lib. i. cap. 8.

mortar, very perfect," and worshiped it as a divinity. It was seated on its hind-quarters, on the floor of one of the temples, rising on its fore-legs, and with its hind-legs bent under it. Those barbarians adored it as the god of thunder and thunderbolts, calling him Tziminchac, which means the bride of thunder, or the thunderbolt[1]. They gave it this name from having seen some of the Spaniards who were with Cortes fire their muskets over their horses' heads when they were hunting the deer, and they believed the horses were the cause of the noise that was made, which they took for thunder, and the flash of the discharge and the smoke of the gunpowder for a thunderbolt.

Leaving behind him the friendly Itzaex of the Lake of Peten, Cortes now directed his march to the south-west; but though the distance that yet remained to be traversed was less than that which he had already accomplished, the dangers and difficulties which beset him were even greater than any he had yet experienced. In one place the pass was so rough that the horses lost all their shoes, and after descending the banks of a small stream, the army was compelled to halt for two days, to enable the farriers to re-shoe them, and also to wait for the baggage, which, from the bad condition of the road and the quantity of rain that fell, had not arrived. But this was a minor evil, compared with that which awaited them further on, at the pass to which they gave the name of the 'Sierra de los Pedernales,' or 'Mountain of Flints,' where the hills were completely covered with sharp stones that cut like razors. "Our men," says Bernal Diaz, "gave themselves considerable trouble in searching for some other road, in order to avoid these

[1] Villagutierre, lib. i. cap. 10.

stones, but all their endeavours were fruitless, though they went to a distance of above four miles. This part of our march was most dangerous for the horses, for, as it still continued to rain, they constantly stumbled, and were sure to cut their knees, and even their bellies, in the most dreadful manner on the pointed stones; but the descent was still more difficult, eight of the horses being killed, and many others shockingly lacerated; and one of the soldiers, named Palacios Rubios, a relative of Cortes, had the misfortune to break his leg[1]."

But the description which Cortes himself gives of this fearful pass is still more graphic. "If I wished," he says in his celebrated letter to the Emperor, "to describe to your Majesty the steepness and unevenness of this pass, neither I, nor any one however better able than I to express himself, could describe it; nor could any one who heard it comprehend it, unless he saw it with his own eyes, and, by passing it, learned it by his own experience. I will merely say to Your Majesty, that in going the eight leagues which was the length of this pass, we were twelve days from the time we entered it, till the last men and the baggage issued from it; during which seventy-eight horses were killed by falls and fatigue, and all the others which remained were so wounded that we believed that we could not in any way advance. . . . And all the time we were going through this pass it never ceased to rain, night or day, and the hills were in such a state that the water did not remain so as to enable us to drink it, and so we suffered great distress from thirst, and most of the horses died from not having anything to drink; and had it not been that in the huts which we made every night to lodge in,

[1] Bernal Diaz, cap. 177.

we collected some water in pots and other vessels, so that, as it rained so much, there was some for us and for the horses, it would have been impossible for a single man or horse to have escaped from these mountains[1]."

Nor were their perils at an end when this difficulty was at length overcome; for at the base of the Sierra there ran a broad river, which was so swollen and rapid, in consequence of the heavy rains, that it was found impossible to cross it, until a ford was discovered at a considerable distance higher up.

"It is formed by the river widening in that part for more than two-thirds of a league, because some very large rocks lying in front make it spread, and among these rocks there are shallows by which the river is crossed—the most dreadful thing that can be seen, owing to the rapidity and great force with which the water runs there; and of these are several, and the whole river runs through them, because there is no other place for it to pass; and, in order to get over these channels, we cut down some very large trees, which we placed across from rock to rock, and with much danger succeeded in crossing, holding on by some reeds which we tied from one side to the other; and if ever so slight a slip were made, it was impossible for him who fell to escape death; and of these crossings there were twenty and odd[2]."

It appears that two whole days were consumed in effecting the passage of this river, which in all probability was one of the tributaries or head-waters of the Usumasinta, though beyond conjecture there is little to guide us to the various stations named by Cortes, after quitting the Lake of Peten. After passing this dangerous ford, he says he arrived, on the 15th of April, 1525,

[1] Quinta Carta, sect. xxvii. [2] Ibid.

at a village, or group of houses, called Tenas; his troops being much exhausted, having had nothing to eat for ten days but the kernels and buds of palm-trees. Bernal Diaz, who is always loud in his complaints when provisions fall short, remarks here:—

"For myself I do not hesitate to acknowledge that I never, in the whole course of my life, felt so distressed in mind as on this occasion, when I found I could neither procure food for my men nor for myself. Added to all this, we had overheated ourselves by marching about the neighbourhood in a burning sun for a couple of hours in search of inhabitants. It happened to be the eve of Easter-day, and I shall never forget this day so long as I live; and the reader can easily imagine what a pleasant Easter we spent, without a morsel of food. We should have considered ourselves blest and happy if we had only had a handful of maize."

Provisions were however procured in greater or less quantities, according to the success of the foragers, who were sent out whenever reports reached them through the Indians whom they occasionally captured, of cultivated or inhabited lands; but the means of subsistence of the adventurers continued throughout their march to be extremely precarious, and constant toil was their companion at every step they made. With the loss of more than half their horses, and the remainder so jaded and footsore that a single league of ground was sometimes the work of days; with hunger and thirst, and the elements to contend with, with wearied bodies and discontented minds, and with little of hope that they should ever extricate themselves from a wilderness, the difficulties of which appeared to increase as they advanced; the army of Cortes must have presented a sad and dis-

heartening contrast to that which their leader had beheld six months before, when they marched with all their bravery from out the walls of Mexico.

But wearied, dispirited, exhausted, they still held on, sustained by that indomitable courage, which within the space of five years had enabled a handful of men to conquer a new world, and, as in all their previous attempts, success eventually attended them in this. The main features of the march of Cortes having been already described, it is the less necessary to details the trials, the accidents, and the privations to which his men were exposed in prosecuting the rest of their journey to the coast of Honduras; but the close of an enterprise so full of vicissitude and so fraught with danger demands a place in this sketch.

Cortes had reached the province which he terms Aculin, and a march of four days divided him from a place called Tania, which had been marked on his map as lying in the direction of the town where the Spaniards were said to have established themselves. This march was not the least perilous of his many adventures, and he speaks of the road as so rugged and precipitous, that when the horses failed beneath their loads, they were obliged to leave them where they fell[1], for, famine-driven as they were, to waste time in these dreary deserts would have exposed them all to certain death; but it was accomplished at last without the loss of any of his men, though a first-cousin of Cortes, named Juan Davalos, had a narrow escape of his life. At Tania however, which could only have been at a short distance from the Gulf of Dulce, good tidings awaited the expedition, for there Cortes received from some Indians certain intelli-

[1] Quinta Carta.

gence of the Spaniards whom he sought. These Indians told him that the town in which they were to be found, called Nito, was only two days' journey from thence, that they had themselves seen the "bearded men," and they further produced two women, natives of Nito, who gave him a fuller account, confirming the fact of the presence of his countrymen.

But between the place where he then was, and that which was to witness the accomplishment of all his labours, there still lay a rapid river, the Cajabon, or Polochic, and a wide lake, the Gulf of Dulce, into which the former ran, whose outlet was the sea. To cross these without rafts or canoes was impossible; and Sandoval was sent forward to the coast, with a few foot-soldiers and some guides, to discover the means of approaching Nito, unperceived by the garrison of Cristoval de Olid, who was supposed by Cortes to occupy the place, it being the General's design to attack Nito by night, and capture Olid and his troops when he least dreamt of danger. The expedition of Sandoval was successful: he reached the Rio Dulce, and, having captured an Indian canoe, crossed over to the right bank of the river, where he lay concealed for two days; at the end of which time he fell in with four Spaniards, who had ventured into the country in search of provisions, of which they were greatly in want. These men formed a part of the garrison established by Gil Gonzales de Avila, at Nito[1]; and the story which they had to tell

[1] Juarros states that Gil Gonzales de Avila founded the small town of San Gil de Buena Vista, at Cape Three Points, on his first arrival in Honduras, in 1523; but that he shortly afterwards abandoned it, to form another settlement at Nito; which place, says Juarros, was "near the sea[a]." The probability is, that Nito was situ-

[a] Juarros: History of the Kingdom of Guatemala (1823), p. 324, Baily's translation.

was a chequered one. They gave a sorrowful account of themselves, and of the distress to which they had been reduced from want of food; but their information concerning Cristoval de Olid proved most satisfactory to Cortes, for he learnt the news of that captain's death, and received the assurance that, instead of meeting with rebellious opposition, he would be hailed as a friend and deliverer. Accompanied by six soldiers, he was the first to cross the Rio Dulce in order to reach the new town; and great at first was the consternation of the inhabitants on his entrance, but greater still their joy, when they learnt that he who came was the man whose fame was spread throughout the whole of the countries which had been conquered for the Crown of Spain.

With the arrival of Cortes at Nito, the association of his adventures with the Province of Yucatan is at an end; and to trace the further history of that peninsula, we must turn to those who addressed themselves more immediately to its civilization.

ated a short distance to the south-east of the Rio Dulce, within the territory of the present Belgian settlement of St. Thomas, though not occupying the site of that town. Remesal states that the port of St. Thomas was discovered on the 7th of March, 1604[a].

[a] Historia de la Provincia de Chiapa y Guatemala, lib. xi. cap. 20. (Madrid, 1619.)

CHAPTER VI.

SOME ACCOUNT OF FRANCISCO DE MONTEJO.—HE IS SENT BY CORTES TO SPAIN.—ARRIVES AT SEVILLE, AND IS BADLY RECEIVED BY ARCHBISHOP FONSECA.—HE ADDRESSES THE EMPEROR CHARLES V. DIRECT.—THE CHARGES AGAINST CORTES DISMISSED.—MONTEJO SOLICITS AND OBTAINS THE GOVERNMENT OF YUCATAN.—THE CAPITULACION THAT WAS ENTERED INTO.—MONTEJO PREPARES AN EXPEDITION, AND ARRIVES AT COZUMEL.—HE TAKES FORMAL POSSESSION OF YUCATAN IN THE NAME OF THE KING.—APPARENT FRIENDLINESS OF THE INDIANS.—ATTEMPT TO MURDER MONTEJO.—MONTEJO'S FIRST MARCH.—AMBUSCADE OF THE INDIANS.—FIERCE BATTLE.—THE INDIANS DEFEATED.—MONTEJO RESOLVES ON PACIFIC MEASURES.—EXPEDITION OF DAVILA.—NUMEROUS SKIRMISHES.—SIEGE OF CHICHEN-ITZA.—ARTIFICE OF THE SPANIARDS.—WITHDRAWAL OF MONTEJO.

AMONGST those men "of courage and energy," as Bernal Diaz calls them, who accompanied the expedition of Juan de Grijalva in 1518, not the least conspicuous was Francisco de Montejo, who had been amongst the earliest to adventure into the then "far west," and had obtained a "*hacienda*" in Cuba, under the government of Diego Velasquez. Montejo was a cavalier of Old Castile, a native of Salamanca, of fair property and noble descent, and possessed in a remarkable degree those enterprising qualities which more or less distinguished the Spaniards of that adventurous period: he had shared in all the dangers that befell Grijalva at Champoton, and

when the first interview took place between the Mexicans and the Spaniards at the river of Banderas, it was to Montejo that the command was entrusted, in the expectation of a hostile termination to the meeting; his conduct and advice were moreover essentially serviceable in all the vicissitudes of a voyage which is notable for having been the first that explored the coast of Mexico.

When the expedition under Cortes took place, in the following year, it was not likely that a man of so much enterprise as Montejo would remain behind; and accordingly we find that he joined Cortes at the Havana, when the latter arrived there after escaping from the detention prepared for him at Trinidad by Diego Velasquez. Montejo was, as we have already seen, the commander of one of the eleven vessels which were mustered at Cozumel, previous to the departure of the vessel for its ultimate destination, and his career may be traced at intervals, in all the proceedings of Cortes up to the period of his arrival at Vera Cruz. Being one of the most influential of the partisans of Diego Velasquez, it was the policy of Cortes to attach Montejo to his own cause, and it was with this view that when the town of Vera Cruz was founded[1], Montejo was appointed one of the Chief Alcaldes, in conjunction with Alonso Puertocarrero, his colleague in the mission to the Emperor Charles V., when the first present was transmitted from Mexico, and the first of that series of celebrated letters was written by Cortes.

Montejo and his companion sailed from San Juan de Ulloa on the 26th of July, 1519, having promised to proceed direct to Spain, and "not to touch at the Havana under any pretext whatever[2]," in order that Velasquez

[1] Bernal Diaz, cap. xlii. [2] Ibid., cap. liv.

might learn nothing of what had taken place after the expedition had left Cuba. But Montejo did not keep his promise, though, from his subsequent conduct, it is probable that, in departing from his instructions, he was guided more by his own interests (having a settlement of his own on the coast of Cuba, called El Marien), than incited by wilful treachery towards Cortes. Bernal Diaz says, "He left our chief pilot Alaminos, persuading him to sail along the coast in the direction of his settlement (El Marien), where he pretended he would take in a fresh supply of cassava, bread, and bacon. Puertocarrero was greatly displeased with this conduct; however, the landing was effected. The night following a sailor swam secretly on shore, and forwarded Diego Velasquez letters from his adherents, giving an account of all that had passed. We afterwards learnt that Montejo himself had sent the man, who, besides this, spread the news everywhere along the route he journeyed." Bernal Diaz adds, that the letters to Velasquez were said to be in Montejo's handwriting. If this were really the case, it was done at great personal risk, for when Velasquez became aware of the valuable present, and who were the agents selected to bear it, his rage was excessive, and he immediately ordered two very swift-sailing vessels to be fitted out, with as great a number of men and fire-arms as could be got together at the moment, and sent them in pursuit of Montejo's vessel, with instructions to capture her and bring her into Santiago. But Velasquez, who seems to have been born for disappointments and annoyances, was unsuccessful in his object, and the agents of Cortes, escaping the pursuit, had a most favourable voyage to Spain. They arrived at Seville, "where they hired a carriage, and posted to the

Imperial court residence, at that time at Valladolid." Here the Archbishop Fonseca, the President of the Council of the Indies, who governed during the Emperor's absence in Flanders, received them very ill; and, being entirely in the interests of Velasquez, whose chaplain, Benito Martin, had arrived with heavy complaints against Cortes, suppressed the despatches of the latter, and forwarded his own account of the Mexican expedition to Charles V., "in which," says Bernal Diaz, "he extolled the merits of his creature Velasquez to the very skies, saying everything that was bad of Cortes and all of us." "Upon this," continues Bernal Diaz, "Puertocarrero, Montejo, Martin Cortes, the father of our General, the Licentiate Nuñez, who was reported to the Royal Council, and a near relation of Cortes, determined to despatch a courier of their own to the Emperor in Flanders. They fortunately possessed duplicates of all our despatches and letters, as also a list of all the presents we had destined for his Majesty."

From the share which Montejo had in this transaction, which eventually terminated in the disgrace of Fonseca, it appears tolerably certain that the charge of unfaithfulness to Cortes, with which he has been taxed, had very little, if any foundation. It was indeed his own cause, as well as that of Cortes, of which Montejo was the strenuous advocate, and by the issue of the inquiry before the Privy Council he was doomed to stand or fall. The Royal Commissioners, whose deliberations were not terminated till the 17th of May, 1523, dismissed the majority of the charges against Cortes, "and," observes Bernal Diaz, "Francisco de Montejo did not forget to profit by his stay at the Imperial Court." But what profit he derived from his exertions was certainly not immediate,

for it was not till more than three years afterwards that he was able to obtain anything for himself, and then only on the terms accorded to all the Spanish "Conquistadors,"—the first risks and the first expenses, to be counterbalanced by the titular authority and subsequent advantages.

It was in the year 1526, that, "being in Madrid, Francisco de Montejo solicited the government of Yucatan, in order to conquer and pacificate that country[1]," and, in consideration of the services he had rendered, both under Grijalva and Cortes, the Emperor, in granting his request, conferred upon him the title of Don, with an honourable augmentation to his arms[2]. The commission was accompanied by a "Capitulacion" from the Emperor, containing very ample instructions for his conduct in his new office; and the officers under him were Alonso Davila, as royal accountant, Pedro de Lima, as treasurer, and Hernando Moreno de Quito, as overseer of the works, "though," says Cogolludo, "this last office was not necessary, there being no mines in that kingdom." The chief features of the "Capitulacion," which is dated December 8, 1526, were these:—

That Don Francisco de Montejo should have license and power to conquer and people the islands of Yucatan and Cozumel at his own cost, and should erect two fortresses in them at the most convenient place. That he should set out within one year from the date of the instrument, and retain the office of Governor and Captain-general for life[3], as well as that of Adelantado, which latter office, on his death, should descend to his heirs and

[1] Cogolludo: Historia de Yucathan (folio: Madrid, 1688).

[2] "Para que todos los dias de vuestra vida seais nuestra Governador y Capitan General de las dictas Islas."—Cogolludo, lib. ii. cap. ii. p. 62.

[3] Herrera, Déc. III.

successors for ever. Ten square leagues of land, and four per cent. of all the profit or advantage to be derived from all the lands discovered and peopled, were to be given to himself, his heirs and successors for ever. Those who should join the expedition under him were for the first three years to pay only the tenth part of the gold of the mines, the fourth year a ninth part, and the percentage should go on increasing till it reached a fifth part. They should be exempted from export duty upon the articles they carried with them, provided they were not taken for barter or sale. They were to be allowed portions of land, and, after living on them four years complete, were to be at liberty to sell them, and use them as their own; also to take rebellious Indians for slaves, and to take and buy Indians held by the caciques as slaves, under the regulations of the Council of the Indies. The tithes or tenth-parts were granted to be expended in churches and ornaments, and things necessary for divine worship. It was also provided that no lawyers or attorneys should go into those lands from Spain, nor from any other part, on account of the litigation and controversies that would follow them[1].

On account of the fame of these expeditions, many flocked to the standard of Montejo, whose expenses in purchasing arms, ammunition, horses, and vessels, were very great; insomuch that he was obliged to sell his hereditary property, which brought him in an income of a thousand ducats. With the money which he thus raised he fitted out four vessels, and early in 1527 embarked with about four hundred troops exclusive of sailors, and set sail from Spain for the conquest of Yucatan. The

[1] "No vayan ni passen á la dicta tierra, de estos nuestros Reynos, ni de otras partes, Letrados ni Procuradores algunos, por los pleytos y diferencias que de allos le siguen."

only ecclesiastic who accompanied the Adelantado was Francisco Hernandez, the chaplain to the expedition,—a circumstance which was afterwards the occasion of much anxiety to the Council of the Indies, who ascribed the ill-success which at first attended the enterprise, to the absence of a sufficient number of ecclesiastics, for whom provision had been expressly made in the royal "Capitulacion." Neither had Montejo any interpreter to communicate with the Indians, a want of which was very much felt after he reached Yucatan.

The first place he landed at was Cozùmel; but at what time of the year is not stated either by Cogolludo or Herrera. His reception there by the natives was sufficiently friendly, but on his quitting the island for the continent it became somewhat altered in character, though appearances were still kept up. Besides the rumours which reached them from the Gulf of Mexico, the Indians had already had experience enough on their own coasts, during the expeditions of Cordova and Grijalva, not to mistrust the motives with which the strangers came amongst them; but they were unwilling to commence hostilities, and suffered the Spaniards to disembark on the mainland, ignorant, of course, when the royal banner was displayed by the Alferez Gonzalo Nieto, who loudly cried, "España! España! España! Viva!" that possession had been taken of their country in the name of the Emperor-King Don Carlos.

On what part of the coast of Yucatan the disembarkation took place is uncertain, some writers stating that it was opposite to where now stands the city of Valladolid, others more to the south at Bakhalal (Bacalar), some at a town called Coni (not to be confounded, says Cogolludo, with Conil, though also on the northern

shore), and others again as far to the westward as Campeachy. The cause of this diversity of opinion arises, according to Cogolludo, from the delays which occurred in effecting the conquest of the province, the different periods when the attempts were made, and the opposite points at which the various expeditions landed. But, independently of the difficulty of settling a question of this kind at this distance of time, if even the invaders themselves had possessed an accurate notion of a country with whose language they were entirely unacquainted, the indications afforded by the early geographers in that part of the world are so arbitrary and uncertain, that no safe deduction can be made, even from the maps which they have left for our guidance, and an approximation to truth is all that can be accomplished[1].

The apparent friendliness of the Indians had the effect at first of throwing the Spaniards off their guard, and they were freely admitted to such imperfect conferences as took place between them; but on one of these occasions an attempt was made to assassinate the Adelantado by a native, who snatched a sword from a Negro slave, and aimed a blow at Montejo as he was standing near. Montejo saw the action in time, and drew his own sword to defend himself; but some Spanish soldiers coming up at

[1] A notable example of geographical inaccuracy may be observed on the map of Yucatan and Honduras ("Yucatana Regio et Fondura") given in Wytfliet's 'Histoire des Indes Occidentales' (fol. Douay, 1611), in which the Bay of Chetemal (Chetumal) is removed to the Gulf of Amatique, full 3° to the southward of its natural position; and Nito, which occupied the site of the Belgian colony of St. Thomas, on the coast of Honduras, is transferred to the Province of Nicaragua, between the lake of that name and the Rio Escondido, an error of nearly 300 miles. Truxillo, also, is placed on the Mosquito coast, near the river Wanks, lying immediately beneath the Cape Honduras. This map may be consulted by the curious either in the French or Latin editions of Wytfliet, both of which are to be found in the King's Catalogue in the British Museum, under the respective press-marks, 146. c. 8, and 146. e. 14.

the moment fell on the Indian, and immediately put him to death. This attempt induced Montejo to leave Coni for the province of Choáca, where he proposed to commence his undertaking of pacificating (or conquering) the province; and with this object in view, he began a long and difficult march, through a country where there were no regular roads, but only such paths as the Indians used in crossing the mountains. On this march the troops suffered greatly from the heat and want of water, there being no rivers in that part of the peninsula; but they persevered, and succeeded in arriving at the town of Choáca, which they found dispeopled, the inhabitants having fled to join a body that entered into a confederation to receive the Spaniards with arms in their hands, as soon as they received the news of the arrival of the strangers at Cozumel.

Guided by an Indian prisoner, Montejo's force advanced upon a town called Aké, but before they could reach it they were sorely beset by the natives, who, lying in ambuscade, assailed them with great fury. They were armed with every weapon known in Indian warfare. They had bows and quivers full of arrows, pikes, darts, lances pointed with sharp flints, and strong swords of hard wood, which they wielded with both hands; and they rushed from their places of concealment with loud cries, striking their spears against their bucklers formed of huge tortoise-shells, and aggravating the noise they made with conch-shells, which they used as trumpets. They were entirely naked, except their loins, which were covered by a cloth, and their bodies were smeared with earth of various tints, so that they appeared, says Cogolludo[1], "like the fiercest devils;" their nostrils and ears

[1] Cogolludo, lib. ii. cap. vi. p. 77.

were pierced, and from them hung ornaments and stones of various colours.

In this manner they presented themselves to the Castilians, who were greatly astonished to see such singular figures, and to hear the strange noises they made; but the Adelantado and Alonso Davila, who had had experience of this sort of warfare, animated their men to the conflict, and a fierce battle ensued, both sides fighting with great bravery. The nature of the ground did not admit of the Spaniards employing their horses as they wished, but such as were mounted and could advance attacked the Indians, making great slaughter, and transfixing them with their long lances. The battle lasted the whole day, and though the Indians experienced great loss, they were so strongly reinforced that the Spaniards had quite enough to do to maintain their ground: several of them were killed, and many severely wounded, besides the loss of horses and trained dogs[1]; and night put an end to the conflict without victory having declared for either side. On the following morning the fight was renewed with the same vigour, and lasted till about mid-day, when the Indians began to give way, and finally took refuge in the mountains, after losing upwards of a thousand men. This battle took place towards the close of the year 1527.

Montejo now came to the determination of reconnoitring the country slowly and carefully, avoiding battle with the Indians as much as he possibly could, for he

[1] Captain Southey, in his 'Chronological History of the West Indies,' alludes to this habit of training dogs for warfare. Under date of the year 1511, he says: "In Porto Rico, Juan Ponce revenged the death of the Spaniards. In several battles, a large dog, called Bezerrillo, did more execution than any soldier; he was allowed the pay of a crossbowman, and a share and a half of prize-money. Bezerrillo was killed in battle by an arrow."

had found them to be warlike, and their numbers made them still more formidable: he therefore sought rather to conciliate, and make them friendly with the Spaniards, in this respect justifying the character given of him by Bernal Diaz, that he was "rather a man of business than a soldier[1]," though the rough old Conquistador's estimate of soldierly qualifications must be accepted with considerable allowance for his own prejudices: we have seen also how, in another place, Bernal Diaz gives Montejo credit for "courage and energy."

With this peaceful intention the Adelantado set out for Aké, directing his march upon the province of Chichen-Itzá, where he desired to establish a colony, believing that the situation was favourable for the erection of one of the strong fortresses which the "Capitulacion" required him to build. He was, to all appearances, successful in his endeavours at conciliation, and founded a town, in which he located a hundred and sixty of his men, amongst whom he divided the township, though the Indians were at heart but little pleased with the settlement made by the strangers in their land, and were not long before they resented it.

By the accounts which had been received, and from the map which the Adelantado possessed, the Spaniards gathered that in the province of Bakhalal (called by the Indians Vaymil and Chetemal) there were mines of gold to be discovered, and, with the object of appropriating them, a force was detached by Montejo, the command of which was given to Alonso Davila, with directions to proceed to the southward with the same purpose of pacification. If Bernal Diaz may be credited, Davila was not the man to propitiate the Indians by fair words,

[1] Bernal Diaz, cap. ccvi. [2] Ibid., ante, cap. viii.

for he describes him as a "courageous officer, but of a quarrelsome disposition;" and, whether it were owing to his own nature, or to the opposition of the natives, he certainly did not achieve the object which Montejo had in view, his expedition being one continued series of hostilities, ending in defeat.

Alonso Davila set out with a force of fifty infantry and seventeen horse, taking with him one Francisco Vasquez, who had great experience in mining, and to whom the Adelantado had promised three hundred ducats if he should find indications of the existence of gold in the province. Davila directed his march upon a town called Chable, one of those which had been described as situated in the golden region. The cacique of that place evinced a friendly disposition towards the adventurers, who immediately set to work in search of the promised gold, but found none. The belief in its existence was however too deeply rooted to be eradicated by the first failure, and it was resolved to proceed further. Chetemal was the next point, and to the cacique of that district Davila despatched a message by the cacique of Chable, inquiring if gold were to be found there, and demanding a supply of provisions. The answer which was brought back by the cacique of Chable was, that he of Chetemal would pay no attention to the message, and warned the Spaniards not to come; adding, that the fowls they asked for they should get at their lances' points, and the maize in a flight of arrows[1]. To punish this insolence, Alonso Davila set out himself with twenty-five infantry, eight horsemen, and several caciques, who proceeded to the coast, where he embarked

[1] "Que las gallinas que le pedia, las daria en las lanças, y el maiz en las flechas."—Cogolludo, lib. ii. cap. vi. p. 80.

his men in canoes, and thus finally arrived at Chetemal, which, notwithstanding the fierce reply of the cacique, he found deserted.

The situation of Chetemal appearing favourable for his purpose, Davila resolved to establish a town there, to which he gave the name of Villa Real, and caused the remainder of the force which he had left behind at Chable, to join him. But though the cacique of Chetemal had fled at Davila's first approach, it was only the better to oppose him afterwards, for which purpose he allied himself with some neighbouring tribes, persuading their chiefs it was necessary for their common safety that they should unite to drive the Spaniards from the country. When Davila heard of the plot thus formed, he at once assumed the initiative, and, having provided for the defence of Villa Real, went out with half his force to seek the enemy. A severe skirmish took place, in which the Indians were defeated, but the victory was of no value. As often as they met the Indians in the field, the invaders displayed their accustomed valour; but the odds against the Spaniards were far too great to admit of their achieving any signal success, or of forming a permanent establishment in that part of the country; and Davila found, at the expiration of nearly two years, that a continued occupation of the new colony had become impossible. The precise date at which he withdrew from Chetemal is not stated by any of the Spanish authorities, but it was, in all probability, coincident with the determination of Montejo no longer to remain in a country which he also had found to be too difficult to hold. Montejo's resolve appears to have been the consequence of a battle fought near Chichen-Itzá, the capital of the province of that name, in which the Spaniards lost no

less than a hundred and fifty men. His army was reduced by numerous losses; the supplies which he had brought from Spain were still in his vessels on the coast; there were no practicable roads for transit, and a hostile population surrounded him on every side. He therefore, after a long but ineffectual struggle, relinquished all hope of subjugating the country with the force which still remained at his command, and the word was given to return to the coast; but to accomplish this object, it was necessary to employ stratagem, and the device which Montejo hit upon was as amusing as it was effectual.

Having noticed that the Indians, encamped before Chichen-Itzá, were careless on their watch, he caused a hungry dog to be tied to the tongue of a large bell, and food to be placed at a distance which the hound could not reach. Having reconnoitred the position of the enemy, the Spaniards silently left the town, directing their march to the north, in order to reach the sea. When the dog saw them depart he strove to follow them, and his motion rang the bell; every time he tried to reach his food he renewed the ringing, and thus throughout the Indians were deceived, believing that the Spaniards still occupied the town, and that the sound of the bell was a proof of their being on the alert. The Spaniards were by this artifice enabled to reach the coast in safety, and it was not for some hours that the Indians discovered the nature of the trick that had been played them. Finding however that the bell-ringing continued after the morning came, they advanced upon the town, and found that the whole of the Spaniards had disappeared. It was not difficult to track their march, and before Montejo's force reached the coast, the Indians came up with them, and endeavoured to provoke a battle. They

did not venture to attack the retreating foe, who held themselves in good order to receive the assault, but sought by gestures of defiance and injurious language to induce the Spaniards to lay aside their defensive attitude. This the prudence of Montejo and his son, a cavalier of rising merit, would not permit, and the Indians finally withdrew, with the sole satisfaction of knowing that the invaders had left the eastern shores of Yucatan.

Montejo had proceeded to the opposite coast by sea, and disembarked his troops at Campeachy, from which place he threatened further hostilities.

CHAPTER VII.

ARRIVAL OF DAVILA AT CAMPEACHY.—THE INDIANS ATTACK MONTEJO.—THE ADELANTADO NEARLY MADE PRISONER.—MONTEJO PRAYS TO BE RELEASED FROM HIS GOVERNMENT OF YUCATAN.—ROYAL CEDULA ENJOINING HIM TO PROSECUTE THE WAR.—REVOLT AT TABASCO.—THE SPANIARDS WITHDRAW FROM THE PENINSULA.—THE RELIGIOUS PACIFICATION OF THE COUNTRY RESOLVED ON.—THE ADELANTADO RETURNS TO YUCATAN.—DISEMBARKATION AT CHAMPOTON.—NIGHT ATTACK BY THE INDIANS.—GENERAL ASSAULT OF THE SPANISH CAMP.—THE INDIANS REPULSED.—DIMINISHED NUMBER OF THE SPANIARDS.—THEIR DESPAIRING CONDITION.—EVENTUAL RELIEF.—THE PACIFICATION ENTRUSTED TO MONTEJO THE YOUNGER.—PERILOUS EXPEDITION TO TIHOO.—THE LAST GENERAL BATTLE.—FOUNDATION OF MERIDA AND VALLADOLID.—FURTHER CONQUESTS.

THOUGH sorely depressed by the mischances of the last two years, the courage and perseverance of Montejo were still unbroken, and a fresh stimulus to exertion was afforded him in the arrival at Campeachy of his lieutenant Davila, who, after having made his way by sea to Truxillo, had recruited his forces there, and returned to unite his fortunes once more with those of the Adelantado.

The moment this reinforcement reached him, Montejo resolved to profit by it, and Davila was sent off with fifty men to penetrate the country from the western coast. The Indians, having learnt how greatly Montejo's own forces had been reduced by this draft, for only forty

infantry and ten horsemen remained in Campeachy, assembled in great numbers to attack him[1]. "Hearing a tumult the Adelantado went out on horseback, and, riding towards a group assembled on a little hill, cried out, endeavouring to pacify them; but the Indians, turning in the direction of his voice, and recognizing the Adelantado, surrounded him, laid hands upon the reins of his horse, and tried to wrest from him his lance, and others, who came up at the moment, rescued the Adelantado. Both himself and the brave Gonzales were very severely wounded, and the horse of the latter died of his wounds[2]." When the Indians saw that Montejo had been rescued by his own men they gradually withdrew, and the danger which threatened the Spaniards from their assemblage was averted.

But the Adelantado, with all his soldier-like qualities, "n'avait pas la main heureuse." The discovery of Peru had recently taken place, and the riches of that country, widely bruited, caused many of his men to desert from a service which held out but little prospect of the recompense for which the Spanish adventurers mainly fought. Montejo felt that if he proposed effectually to subdue the province of Yucatan his forces must be greatly augmented, and he therefore determined upon proceeding to New Spain to recruit them, at the same time sending information to the King of the misfortunes that had befallen him since his first arrival in Yucatan, and praying that his services might be employed elsewhere, since he had no hope of success there. He begged also that the Government of Honduras might be united to that of

[1] Cogolludo says they were more than 20,000: "Eran mas de veinte mil."—Hist. de Yucathan, lib. ii. cap. x. p. 92.

[2] 'Incidents of Travel in Yucatan' (2 vols, 8vo: London, Murray, 1843), by J. L. Stephens, who in this account has closely followed Cogolludo.

Yucatan, as he hoped, with the people of one province, to subdue those of the other. The latter part of his request was not acceded to, as Honduras was included in the Government of Guatemala, under Pedro de Alvarado; but a *Cedula Real*, or "royal parchment," dated from Ocaña, April 4th, 1531, was despatched to Montejo, commanding that every assistance should be afforded him to enable him to recover the province. By the aid of this document, together with the produce of his rents in New Spain, the Adelantado collected a number of soldiers, and bought some vessels wherewith to prosecute the conquest of Yucatan. But in the meantime the Indians of Tabasco, a place within the limits of his command, had revolted, and Montejo resolved to reduce them to order before he went on to Campeachy, whither however he despatched his son, Don Francisco, whom he had associated with him in the government. But this attempt to put down the revolt at Tabasco was more difficult than Montejo had anticipated, and Gonzalo Nieto was eventually sent with two vessels to Campeachy, to bring away the whole of the Spaniards to the assistance of the Adelantado. The situation in which Nieto found them was most deplorable. They had been unable to penetrate into the country, and were cooped up at the spot where they had landed. "The Indians cut off their supplies of provisions, and, being short of sustenance, nearly all became ill. They were obliged to make constant sorties to procure food, and it was necessary to let the horses go loose, though at the risk of their being killed. They were reduced so low that but five soldiers (and the captain) remained to watch over and provide for the rest[1]."

[1] Stephens's Abridgment of Cogolludo.

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In one of the sallies which were made by this small body, Gonzalo Nieto received so severe a wound that it was at first supposed to be mortal; but he recovered from it, and then, finding that no exertions could maintain them any longer, it was resolved to abandon the place and return to Tabasco. This event took place in 1535, in which year, says Cogolludo, not a single Spaniard remained in Yucatan[1].

When the news of these disasters reached Spain, the Council of the Indies, confirmed in their opinion that the pacification of the transatlantic provinces could only be surely effected by the conversion of the natives to the Christian faith,—a principle neglected by Montejo, though specifically insisted on in the Capitulacion,—resolved that the next attempt should be made by the Missionary Fathers already established in St. Domingo and New Spain. But before the detail is given of the continuous and successful efforts of the Franciscan friars, it is desirable to follow the military operations in Yucatan to their close. They are so perspicuously narrated by the intelligent author of the 'Incidents of Travel in Yucatan,' that to adopt his words as far as he has pursued the account, and thus avoid the tautologies and digressions of Cogolludo, the only original writer on this period of the history of that country, offers the readiest and best means of laying them before the reader.

"We return now to the Adelantado, whom we left at Tabasco. Severe wars with the Indians, want of arms and provisions, and, above all, desertions instigated by the fame of Peruvian riches, had left him at a low ebb. In this situation he was joined by Captain Gonzalo Nieto and the small band which had been compelled to evacuate

[1] Cogolludo: Historia, lib. ii. cap. 2.

Yucatan[1], and by the presence of these old companions his spirits were again roused.

"But the pacification of Tabasco was much more difficult than was supposed. By communication with the Spaniards, the Indians had lost their fears of them. The country was bad for carrying on war, particularly with cavalry, on account of the marshes and pools; their provisions were again cut off; many of the soldiers went away disgusted, and others, from the great humidity and heat, sickened and died.

"While they were in this extremity the Captain Diego de Contreras, with no fixed destination, and ready to embark in any of the great enterprises which at that time attracted the adventurous soldier, arrived at the port. He had with him a vessel of his own, with provisions and other necessaries, his son, and twenty Spaniards. The Adelantado represented to him the great service he might render the King, and by promises of reward induced him to remain. With this assistance he was enabled to sustain himself in Tabasco until, having received additional reinforcements, he effected the pacification of the country[2].

"The Adelantado now made preparation to return to Yucatan. Champoton was selected as the place of disembarkation. According to some of the historians, he

[1] Cogolludo is silent with respect to the return of Davila and his men, neither is any further mention made of him by Mr. Stephens. It must be inferred however that Davila's attempts to penetrate the province were as unsuccessful as those of Montejo, and that he evacuated it at the same time as the Adelantado.

[2] Gomara says: "Tardó en ello (Tavasco) dos años: ca los naturales no lo querian por bien, ni por mal." He adds: "Pobló allí, y nombrólo Santa Maria de la Vitoria. Gastó otros *seys ó siete años en pacificar la provincia*: en los quales passa mucha hãbre, trabajo y peligro." These "six or seven years" must refer to the renewed efforts of the Montejos to conquer Yucatan, during which time the Spaniards certainly did endure "much hunger, toil, and danger."

did not himself embark on this expedition, but sent his son. It seems more certain, however, that he went in person as Commander-in-chief of the Armada, and, leaving his son, Don Francisco de Montejo, in command of the soldiers, returned to Tabasco, as being nearer to Mexico, from which country he expected to receive and send on more recruits and necessaries. The Spaniards landed some time in the year 1537, and again planted the royal standard in Yucatan. The Indians allowed them to land without noise or opposition, but they were only lying in wait for an opportunity to destroy them. In a few days a great multitude assembled, and at midnight they crept silently up the path and roads which led to the camp of the Spaniards, who, wondering less at the attack than at its being made by night, rushed to their arms. Ignorant as they were of the ground, in the darkness all was confusion. On the east, west, and south, they heard the clamours and outcries of the Indians. Nevertheless they made great efforts; and the Indians, finding their men falling, and hearing the groans of the wounded and dying, relaxed in the fury of their attack, and at length retreated. The Spaniards did not pursue them, but remained in the camp, keeping watch till daylight, when they collected and buried the bodies of their own dead.

"For some days the Indians did not make any hostile demonstrations, but they kept away or concealed as much as possible all supplies of provisions. The Spaniards were much straitened, and obliged to sustain themselves by catching fish along the shores. On one occasion two Spaniards, who had straggled some distance from the camp, fell into the hands of the Indians, who carried them away alive, sacrificed them to their idols, and feasted upon their bodies.

"During this time the Indians were forming a great league of all the caciques in the country, and gathered in immense numbers at Champoton. As soon as all the confederates were assembled, they attacked with a horrible noise the camp of the Spaniards, who could not successfully contend against such a multitude. Many Indians fell, but they counted as well lost a thousand of their own number for the life of one Spaniard. There was no hope but in flight, and the Spaniards retreated to the shore. The Indians pursued them, heaping insults upon them, entered their camp, loaded themselves with the clothing and other things which in the hurry of retreat they had been obliged to leave behind, put on their dresses, and, from the shore, mocked and scoffed at them, pointing with their fingers, taunting them with cowardice, and crying out, 'Where is the courage of the Spaniards?' The latter, hearing from their boats these insults, resolved that death and fame were better than life and ignominy; and, wounded and worn out as they were, took up arms, and returned to the shore. Another fierce battle ensued; and the Indians, dismayed by the resolution with which these vanquished men again made front against them, retired slowly, leaving the Spaniards masters of the field. The Spaniards cared for no more, content to recover the ground they had lost.

"From this time the Indians determined not to give battle again; and the great multitude brought together from different places dispersed, and returned to their homes. The Spaniards remained more at their ease. The Indians, seeing that they could not be driven out of their country, and did not intend to leave it, contracted a sort of friendship with them, but they were not able

to make any advances into the interior. On every attempt they were so badly received, that they were compelled to return to their camp in Champoton, which was in fact their only refuge.

"As Champoton was on the coast, which now began to be somewhat known, vessels occasionally touched there, from which the poor Spaniards relieved some of their necessities; occasionally a new companion remained; but their numbers still diminished, many, seeing the delay, and little profit derived from their labours, abandoning the expedition. The time came when there were only nineteen Spaniards in Champoton, the names of some of whom are still preserved; and they affirm, in their judicial declaration, that in this critical situation they owed their preservation to the prudence and good management of Don Francisco de Montejo, the son of the Adelantado.

"Again they were relieved, and again their force dwindled away. The fame of the riches of Peru was in every mouth. The poverty of Yucatan was notorious. There were no mines; there was but little encouragement for others to join the expedition, and those in Champoton were discouraged. Struggling with continued hardships and dangers, they made no advance towards the conquest of the country; all who could endeavoured to get away, some going in canoes, others by land, as occasion offered. In order to confer upon some means of bettering the condition of things, it was necessary for the son of the Adelantado to visit his father at Tabasco; and he set out, leaving the soldiers at Champoton under the command of his cousin, a third Don Francisco.

"During his absence matters became worse. The

people continued going away, and Don Francisco knew that if they lost Champoton, which had cost them so much, all was lost. Consulting with a few who were most desirous of persevering in the enterprise, he brought together those who were suspected of meditating desertion, and told them to go at once and leave the rest to their fate. The poor soldiers, embarrassed and ashamed at being confronted with companions whom they intended to desert, determined to remain.

"But the succour so earnestly hoped for was delayed. All the expedition which the son of the Adelantado could make, was not sufficient for those who remained in Champoton. They had been nearly three years without making any advances, or any impression upon the country. Despairing of its conquest, and unable to exist in the straits in which they found themselves, they talked openly of disbanding, and going where fortune might lead them. The Captain did all that he could to encourage them, but in vain: all had their luggage and ship-stores ready to embark, and nothing was talked of but leaving the country.

"The exertions of the Captain induced them to take better counsel, and they agreed not to execute their resolution hastily, but, to save themselves from injurious imputations, first to send notice of their intention to the Adelantado. Juan de Contreras was sent with the despatches, who gave the Adelantado, besides, a full account of the desperate condition in which they remained at Champoton.

"His intelligence gave the Adelantado much anxiety. All his resources were exhausted: he had been unable to procure the succour necessary, and he knew that if the Spaniards abandoned Champoton, it would be impossible

to prosecute the conquest of Yucatan. Aware of their necessities, when the news arrived, he had some Spaniards collected to go to their assistance, and now, by gifts and promises, he made some additions, and, while waiting till these could be got ready, despatched Alonso Rosada, one of the new recruits, to give notice of the succour at hand.

"It does not appear whether the Adelantado went to Champoton in person; but vessels arrivéd, carrying soldiers, provisions, clothing, and arms; and towards the end of the year 1539 his son returned with twenty horsemen, from New Spain. The drooping spirits of the Spaniards were revived, and again they conceived hopes of achieving the conquest of the country.

"About this time, too, the Adelantado, grieving over the common misfortune of himself and those who had been constant and enduring, but doubting his own fortune, and confiding in the valour of his son Don Francisco, determined to put into the hands of the latter the pacification of Yucatan. He was at that time settled in the Government of Chiapas, to which place he summoned his son, and, by a formal act, substituted him in all the powers given to himself by the King. The act of substitution is creditable alike to the head and heart of the Adelantado. It begins with an injunction that he should strive that the people under his charge should live and be as true Christians, separating themselves from vices and public sins, not permitting them to speak ill of God, nor his blessed Mother, nor the saints; and it concludes with the words, 'Because I know that you are a pastor who will know how to do it well, putting first God our Lord, and the service of His Majesty, and the good of the country, and the execution of justice.'

"Within a month of the time when he was called away by his father, Don Francisco returned to Champoton with all the provisions necessary for prosecuting, on his own account, the conquest of Yucatan. From this time the door of better fortune seemed open to the Spaniards.

"Don Francisco determined forthwith to undertake the march to Campeachy. At a short distance from Champoton they encountered a large body of Indians, routed them, and, determined not to make any retrograde movement, encamped upon the spot.

"From this place the Indians, mortified and incensed at their defeat, erected fortifications along the whole line of march. The Spaniards could not advance without encountering walls, trenches, and embankments, vigorously defended. All these they gained in succession; and so great was the slaughter of the Indians, that at times their dead bodies obstructed the battle, and the Spaniards were obliged to pass over the dead to fight with the living. In one day they had three battles, in which the Spaniards were almost worn out with fighting.

"Here again the history fails, and it does not appear how they were received in Campeachy; but it is manifest from other authorities that, in the year 1540, they founded a city under the name of San Francisco de Campeche[1].

"Remaining in this place till things were settled, Don Francisco, in pursuance of his father's intentions, determined on descending to the province of Quepech, and founding a city in the Indian town of Tihoo. Knowing that delay was dangerous, he sent forward the Captain

[1] "Pobló Montejo á San Francisco, Cāpeche, á Mérida, Valladolid, Salamanca y Sevilla, y hovóse bien con los Indios."—Gomara, cap. liii. fol. xxi.

Francisco de Montejo, his cousin, with fifty-seven men. He himself remained in Campeachy to receive and organize the soldiers, who, stimulated by the tidings of his improving fortunes, were every day coming in from his father.

"Don Francisco set out for Tihoo, and in all the accounts there is a uniform correspondence in regard to the many dangers they encountered on that journey from the smallness of their numbers, the great multitudes of warlike Indians, and the strong walls and other defences which they found at every step to obstruct their progress. The Indians concealed the wells and ponds, and as there were no streams or fountains, they were perishing with thirst. Provisions were cut off, and they had war, thirst, and hunger on their path. The roads were mere narrow passes, with thick woods on both sides, encumbered with the dead bodies of men and animals, and their sufferings from want of water and provisions were almost beyond endurance.

"Arriving at a town called Potboc, they pitched and fortified their camp, with the intention of making a halt, but at night they were roused by finding the camp on fire. All ran to arms, thinking less of the fire than of the Indians, and in darkness and silence waited to discover the quarter whence the attack would come; but hearing no noise, and relieved from the apprehension of enemies, they attempted to extinguish the flames. By this time however the whole camp, and everything that they had, were burned up. But they were not discouraged. The Captain gave notice of this misfortune to his cousin in Campeachy, and resumed his march. In the year 1540 he arrived at Tihoo.

'In a few days he was joined by forty other Spaniards,

who were sent on by Don Francisco de Montejo; and at this time some Indians came to them and said, 'What are you doing here, Spaniards? more Indians are coming against you, more than there are hairs on the skin of a deer.' The Spaniards answered that they would go out and seek them, and, leaving the guard in the camp, the captain Don Francisco Montejo immediately set out, came upon them at a place five leagues distant, and attacked them with such vigour that, though they at first defended themselves bravely, the Spaniards gained upon them, and killing many, the rest became disheartened, and took to flight:

"In the meantime the son of the Adelantado arrived from Campeachy, and being now all united, and the Indians at first withholding all supplies, they very soon began to suffer from want of provisions. While in this condition, unexpectedly a great cacique from the interior came to them voluntarily, and made submission. Some neighbouring caciques of Tihoo, either moved by this example, or finding that, after so many years of war, they could not prevail against the Spaniards, also submitted. Encouraged by the friendship of these caciques, and believing that they might count upon their succour until they had finished the subjection of the country, the Spaniards determined to form a city on the site occupied by Tihoo; but in the meantime a terrific storm was gathering over their heads. All the Indians from the east of Tihoo were drawing together, and in the month of June, towards the evening of the feast of Barnaby the Apostle, an immense body, varying, according to manuscript accounts, from forty to seventy thousand, came down upon the small band of a little more than two hundred then in Tihoo. The following day they at-

tacked the Spanish camp on all sides. The most terrible battle the Spaniards had ever encountered ensued. 'Divine power,' says the pious historian, 'works more than human valour. What were so few Catholics against so many infidels?' The battle lasted the greater part of the day. Many Indians were killed, but immediately others took their places; for they were so many that they were like the leaves on the trees. The arquebuses and crossbows made great havoc, and the horsemen carried destruction wherever they moved, cutting down the fugitives, trampling underfoot the wounded and dying. Piles of dead bodies stopped the Spaniards in their pursuit. The Indians were completely routed, and for a great distance the ground was covered with their dead.

"The fame of the Spaniards rose higher than before, and the Indians never rallied again for a general battle. All this year the invaders were occupied in drawing to them and conciliating the neighbouring caciques; and on the 6th of January, 1542, they founded, with all legal formality, on the site of the Indian town of Tihoo, the 'very loyal and noble' city of Merida[1]."

The next step taken after the establishment of the seat of government in Merida, in pursuance of the instructions given to Montejo to his son, was to pacificate the provinces to the eastward, viz. Coni and Choáca, where the earliest attempts at settlements had been made; and in the month of May in the same year (1542) the son of the Adelantado entered the province of Zotuta, inhabited by a tribe called the Cocómes. He experienced some resistance at first, but, unable to make head against the Spaniards, the Indians retreated to the mountains, and Montejo occupied the country, those who

[1] Incidents of Travel, vol. i. ch. 3.

remained rendering however a very unwilling obedience. A secure footing having now been obtained, Montejo extended the occupation of Yucatan; and on the 28th of May, 1543, founded the city of Valladolid, in the province of Choáca, which he dedicated "to the glorious Virgin Mary;" but its site was subsequently changed from Choáca to Zaqui, the situation of the latter place affording greater advantages. To subjugate Bakhalal was the next proceeding, and on this mission Gaspar Pacheco was sent from Merida, with the titles of Captain-General and Lieutenant-Governor, accompanied by a sufficient force. After overcoming great difficulties, Pacheco succeeded in conquering the province, and in 1544 founded the city of Salamanca.

But though conquered, the Indians were not pacified. They cherished an inveterate hatred to the Spaniards, which manifested itself on every available occasion; and it required the utmost watchfulness, energy, and concert, to suppress the insurrections which from time to time broke out, nor was it until the commencement of the year 1547 that the final pacification of Yucatan can be said to have been accomplished.

CHAPTER VIII.

FIRST POPULATION OF YUCATAN.—FORM OF GOVERNMENT.—THE LAWS OF THE MAYAS, THEIR FORMS OF WORSHIP, AND SUPERSTITIOUS OBSERVANCES.—WITCHCRAFT.—PAINTED RECORDS.—CALENDAR OF THE MAYAS.—HISTORICAL ERAS.—RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES.—IDOL WORSHIP.—CELEBRATED SHRINES.—BLOOD SACRIFICES.—PRIESTCRAFT.

THE military subjugation of the northern districts of the peninsula having now been effected, its more absolute pacification by the aid of the Christian religion became the main object of the conquerors. Previously however to entering upon the narrative of conversion, it may be desirable to give an outline of the moral condition of the Natives, together with some indication of their early history.

Opinion is divided with regard to the manner in which Yucatan was first peopled, some writers affirming that the early settlers came from the East, and others, with, we think, a much greater show of probability, from the West. Tradition tells that from the western land came a large tribe, headed by a priest named Zamná, who gave names to all the seaports, headlands, and other remarkable features of the country; but it is more likely that the first influx of population is attributable to the great victory that was gained by the nation of the Teo-

chichimecas over the Huexotzincas, by which the former became masters of the province of Tlascala, and, making peace with the surrounding tribes, gradually extended their migrations eastward till they entered the peninsula of Yucatan.

But the language of Yucatan is widely different from that of Mexico, and on this fact the supporters of an Eastern immigration ground their belief.

The Padre Lizana affirms that the inhabitants of the eastern and western shores were quite distinct from each other, calling the former "*Cenial*," and the latter "*Nohhuial*," words which signify the "lesser" and "greater descent" or "irruption." No records however exist to guide us with any certainty towards the actual source from whence the population proceeded, and we are compelled to fall back on the only known account of the nation's origin.

It resolves itself simply into this,—that the country of Yucatan, which the natives called Máya, was first governed by a single ruler, in whose family the supreme authority remained, and whose last descendant was Tutul Xiu, Cacique of Mani,—the same who, with a number of dependent chiefs, came voluntarily, in the year 1541, to proffer friendship and submission to the Spanish invaders.

This cacique, or king,—for the form of government is stated to have been monarchical,—reigned in a populous city called Máyapan, which continued to be the capital of the country until the year 1520 of our era, or two hundred and seventy years from its foundation, according to the computation of the Indians. At this period the various caciques who rose to power during the intestine wars which had long disturbed the kingdom, united for

the purpose of putting an end to the absolute sway of one, and resolved on the destruction of Máyapan, a resolution which they carried out, leaving the king no other possessions than the territory of Mani with its dependencies.

The country was thus broken up into numerous lordships, in each of which the same form of government and the same customs continued to prevail.

Of these the most worthy of notice are such as affected the general principles of the laws of the Máyas, their forms of worship, and the superstitions which they practised.

The code of laws by which the natives of Yucatan were governed appears to have been of very simple form. The relative conditions of debtor and creditor were not recognized; but for such crimes as theft and adultery, the offender, when caught *in flagrante delicto*, was seized, his hands tied behind his back, a collar of wood was fastened on his neck, and he was thrown into a strong cage, until again brought out for judgment. In these cages were also confined the prisoners whom they took in battle. If they were of the common order, slavery was their portion; if men of rank, they were sacrificed to the idols, though in some cases ransom was allowed. One particular cage was painted of different colours, and in it were placed the children destined for sacrifice, as well as those of mature age condemned to the same fate. There was no appeal from the decrees of the judges, and in certain cases the punishment was of the severest kind. Adultery was looked upon as the greatest offence that could be committed, and both sexes were punished alike, being shot to death with arrows, or, according to Aguilar, impaled[1]. Rape and seduction also entailed the

[1] Aguilar, fol. 81. col. 1, cited by Cogolludo.

punishment of death, and it is recorded that a cacique of the city of Mayapan, the capital of the kingdom, caused his own brother to be put to a terrible death for having seduced a virgin. He who slew another was also capitally punished, but in what manner is not stated; he was not, however, made a target for arrows[1]. If the homicide was accidental, the price of blood was compounded for by the delivery of a slave; and if a minor killed a man, his punishment was slavery. Death was inflicted on traitors and incendiaries, and thieves were condemned to be slaves till they were able to buy back their liberty; and, failing to do this, were slaves for life. In cases of adultery, when the crime was not actually witnessed, but only strongly suspected, the presumed offender was punished by having his hands tied behind his back for a certain number of days or hours, or was stripped naked, or had his hair cut off (which was considered a mark of great disgrace), according to the gravity of the circumstances that weighed against him. In a declaration of innocence, or the affirmation of any particular fact, oaths were not taken, but in their stead curses were launched against the supposed false witness, in the belief that the fear of being cursed would prevent a lie being uttered. It was not the custom to flog delinquents, this kind of punishment being unknown to the Indians before they were reclaimed from infidelity.

"The abuses and superstitions," observes Cogolludo, "which the Indians of Yucatan inherit from their fathers, are many and various. They believe in dreams, and interpret and accommodate them to the nature of affairs which they have on hand. If they hear the cry of a bird which they call *kipchch*, they derive a bad augury

[1] "Aunque no moria flechado."—*Cogolludo.*

for the success of any enterprise which they may have undertaken, as the Spaniards themselves do after seeing a fox or hearing a cuckoo. If a traveller finds a large stone, such as are raised to point out the road, he reverences it by placing a branch upon it, and also wipes the dust off, that he may not feel fatigue,—a tradition of his ancestors. When he is travelling towards sunset, and it seems to him that he will arrive late at his journey's end, he places a stone in the first tree he meets with, in order that the sun may not go down too soon, or he pulls out some of his eyelashes and blows them towards the sun, to effect the same purpose. In eclipses of the sun and moon, they make their dogs howl and cry by pinching their bodies and ears, and at the same time strike heavy blows on their tables, seats, and doors: they say that the moon is dying, or that she is being stung by a species of ants which they call Xulab. But at the present time they are much disabused of this error."

Cogolludo adds, that witchcraft was practised amongst them, and that spells were used to cure the stings and bites of insects and serpents, and he speaks of one old wizard of the town of Tezóc, who enchanted and took a rattle-snake in his hand by means of certain idolatrous words, "which were an invocation to the devil, the prince of darkness."

"When they build a new house," he tells us, "which is about every ten or twelve years, they will not enter nor inhabit it till a wizard has blessed it with his incantations. They believe in divination, and decide chances by a handful of maize, counting the grains to see whether they are odd or even, and drawing their conclusion accordingly. In the city of Merida," continues Cogo-

lludo, "it is notorious that there are Indian witches who with certain words open roses before their season for blowing, and give them to those who desire to compel women to their bad purposes: these offer the roses to smell, or place them under the pillow, and if the person to whom they are given inhales the scent, she loses her reason for a length of time, and calls for him who gave it her, and for whom the rose was opened. I have heard too of Indian women of the same city who prepare their chocolate with certain enchantments by means of which to torment their husbands."

In the days of their infidelity, the Indians of Yucatan were in the habit of using books made of the bark of trees, glued together with a kind of white paste or cement, as much as ten or twelve yards wide, which they doubled up like a palm-leaf. On this they painted in colours the history of the year,—its wars, "inundations[1]," hurricanes, famines, and other accidents. From one of these, "which," says Cogolludo, "was obtained from the idolaters by Aguilar, it appears that they had at one time been afflicted by a terrible pestilence, called *Maya-cimil*, and by another called *Oena Kuchil*, meaning sudden death, on which occasions the crows entered the houses to eat the dead bodies there. The inundations or hurricanes they called *Hunyecil*, 'tree floods' (*anegacion de árboles*)."

They counted three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, divided into months of twenty days. The 12th of January they called *Yaax*; the 1st of February, *Zac*; from thence to the 21st, *Ceh*; to the 13th of March, *Mac*; to the second of April, *Kan Kin*; to the 22nd,

[1] The inundations must have been scarce in a country where, as in the northern part of Yucatan, there are no rivers.

Muan; to the 12th of May, *Paax;* and to the 1st of June, *Kayab.* The month *Cum Ku* began on the 21st of June; that of *Vayeab* on the 11th of July: this month bore also the name of *Utuz kin* and *Ulobol kin,* signifying an evil time, for during that period occurred the five days which were necessary to complete the year, and which were considered unlucky. On the 17th of July began the month called *Poop;* on the 6th of August, *Voo;* on the 26th, *Cijp;* on the 15th of September, *Zeec;* in October, *Xul;* in November, *Yax kin;* in December, *Mool;* and the month of *Cheen* ended on the 11th of January. This mode of computation divided the year into eighteen months, the new year commencing on the 17th of July. Besides the bad reputation of the supplementary five days, they were called the nameless days, and the Indians believed, with the fatalist of Plautus[1], that they were set apart for all the "ills that flesh is heir to." When these "*nefasti dies*" (from the 12th to the 16th of July inclusive) came round, they would not on any account leave their houses, but stored them beforehand with everything that they were likely to want, so that they should not be obliged to go abroad. Their most idolatrous rites were practised on these occasions, prayers being offered up to the Gods to protect them from harm, and give them a happy year, with abundant crops.

They counted their eras and ages, which they inserted in their books, from twenty to twenty years, and by lustres of four and four. The first year they fixed in the east, calling it *Cuchhaab;* the second, in the west, called *Ilijx;* the third in the south, *Cavac;* and the fourth, *Muluc,* in the north. These answered the pur-

[1] "Hic ille est dies cum nulla vitæ salus sperabilis est mecum."

pose of Dominical letters. When five of the lustres had accomplished twenty years, they called the period *Katún*, and placed one carved stone upon another, cemented with lime and sand on the walls of their temples and in the houses of the priests, "as may be seen," says Cogolludo, "at this day on certain walls of our convent at Merida in some of the cells. There is one town called *Tixualahtun*, where these stones are to be seen, which it is said contain the archives of the nation, reference being made on them to every remarkable event, as in Spain, in the archives of Simancas[1]."

On great solemnities and days of festival they scarified themselves with lancets made of sharp flint, making incisions on their breasts, arms, and muscular parts; and having drawn blood, filled up the wounds with a sort of black earth or powdered charcoal, which assumed the forms of serpents, birds, and other animals previously traced with the lancets, and were indelible. They also pierced their nostrils for ornaments. Like the Mexicans, they had their peculiar dances and songs, and were led

[1] Mr. Stephens remarks, in his 'Incidents of Travel,' (vol. ii. p. 119,) that "the calendar of Yucatan, though differing in some particulars, was substantially the same with that of the Mexicans. It had a similar solar year of three hundred and sixty-five days, divided in the same manner, first into eighteen months of twenty days each, with five supplementary days, and, secondly, into twenty-eight weeks of thirteen days each, with an additional day. It had the same method of distinguishing the days of the year by a combination of those two series, and the same cycle of fifty-two years, in which the years, as in Mexico, are distinguished by a combination of the same series of thirteen, with another of four names or hieroglyphics; but Don Pio (Perez) acknowledges that in Yucatan there is no certain evidence of the intercalation (similar to our Leap year, or to the Mexican secular addition of thirteen days) necessary to correct the error resulting from counting the year as equal to three hundred and sixty-five days only."

For an account of the "*Katunes*," or epoch of the Yucatecos, in connection with their calendar, the reader is referred to the translation of the "manuscript written in the Máya language," by Don Pio Perez, which is appended to the 2nd volume of Mr. Stephens's 'Incidents of Travel.'

on by one to whom all obedience was paid, who was called *Holpop*, and directed the music, made up of drums (*Tuncúles*), flutes, trumpets, conchs, and tortoise-shell instruments. The *Tuncúl* was made of hollow wood, and some were so large that, down the wind, the noise made on them could be heard at a distance of two leagues. The songs they sang on these occasions were local legends and other antique ballads, for which the missionaries afterwards substituted legends of the saints and mysteries of the faith. It appears also that a kind of drama was not wanting to these arrangements, as there were actors who represented the action of fables and stories of an old time; they were clever too in their mimicry and jests, which they made at the expense of their great men and judges, whom they took this mode of reproving. These actors were called *Balzam*, a name corresponding to that of buffoon or jester.

The principal features of the religious faith of the aborigines of Yucatan appears to have been their belief in one sole Deity, formless, and incapable of being represented by signs or drawings, and bearing the name of *Hunab ku*, from whom proceeded all things, and whom, being incorporate, they adored by no imaged shape. They entertained some notion of places of reward and punishment hereafter, and assigned a place in their ritual to the Devil, to whom they gave the appellation *Xibilba*, significant of one who suddenly disappears or vanishes. Respecting the first creation of man, they believed that he was formed of earth and straw, the former supplying the flesh and bones, and the latter the hair and beard.

The most celebrated place of worship of the Yucatecos was in the island of Cozumel, and thither they used to wend in pilgrimage to make their chief offerings and

sacrifices, and pray for the fulfilment of their desires; but they had nevertheless other temples, the most remarkable being those at Utzmál (or Uxumual), at Chichen Itza, in the town of Ytzamál, between Chapab and Telchuquillo, and others situated on the eastern coast. The priests who officiated in these temples wore ample garments of white cotton, and suffered their hair to grow very long, and it became so matted with the blood of their sacrifices that, without cutting it away, it could not be combed. The sacrifices were men, women, and children, and the inferior animals. Fasting for two or three days at a time was amongst their practices, and during their fasts the priests scarified themselves till they brought blood, which they offered to the Devil. Cogolludo gives a long list of the names of many of the idols of the Yucatecos. One of these represented a powerful goddess, *In açal Voh*, otherwise *Ix Kaulcox*, who was supposed to be the wife of the principal Deity, and the mother of *Ytzamná*, the god who invented written characters. To her was given the credit of having first introduced the art of weaving cotton for dresses. Another idol was in the semblance of a goddess called *Yxchebelyax*, the inventress of painting. The gods of song and music, to whom statues were erected, were *Xocbitum* and *Ah-Kin Xooc*, and there was also a god of poesy, named *Pizlimtec*. Their god of war was *Kukulcan*, and they had another warlike divinity whom they called *Kak upacat*, or "face of flame," who covered himself in battle with a buckler of fire. They had gods also who were Atlantean in their capacity, supporting the heavens on their shoulders, and known by the generic name of *Bacáb*. They had too the prototypes of Æolus and his fellows, in gods who ruled the winds; and one gigantic

deity, named *Chac*, was adored as the inventor of agriculture, and the ruler of thunder and lightning. The god who governed the five evil days of the year was called *Mul Tum Tzec*, and presided over bad weather. There were besides numbers of minor deities, whose attributes were as various as those of the Greek and Roman mythologies, to whom they bore in many respects a striking resemblance.

Cogolludo speaks moreover of a famous temple at Ytzamal, where the idol *Ytzamat ul* was honoured; his name signifying one who possesses the grace or dew of heaven. The Indians said he was a great king, whom they adored as a son of the gods, and when they prayed to him, asking who he was, the sole reply he gave was, "*Ytzencaan, Ytzenmuyal*," "I am the dew or substance of the heavens and the clouds." On the death of this king altars were raised to him, and oracles were delivered to those who came to consult them at his shrine. It was asserted that this divinity had the power of restoring the dead to life, and curing the sick and maimed. Cogolludo is of opinion that *Ytzamal ul* was a great wizard, who deceived the Indians by a compact which he had made with the Devil. He describes another temple of great renown, situated on the southern slope of a high ridge which was dedicated to the same idol, but worshiped there under the form of a hand, the name of *Kab ul*, which it bore, signifying "the hand that wrought;" and the votaries used to travel from all parts, not only of Yucatan, but of Mexico, New Spain, and Guatemala. On a similar northern slope was a temple dedicated to *Kinich kakmó*, an idol fashioned like the sun, with the beak of a bird: he was surrounded by rays of fire, and descended to burn the offered sacrifice at

midday, as the *vacamuya* (a bright-feathered parrot) descends in its flight. This idol was resorted to to avert the calamity of pestilence and mortal ailment. The inhabitants of Campeachy adored a god of cruelty, named *Kinchahan haban*, to whom they offered the sacrifice of human blood; while the people of Tihoo had a similar deity, whose name is *Achun caan*. The list closes with the deification of those women who in their lifetime had preserved their virginity, and thence were called *Zuhny Kak*, or virgin fire.

The question has arisen whether or not the idolatrous Yucatecos were a circumcised race. Cogolludo denies the fact, but earlier authorities assert it without hesitation,—amongst them, Peter Martyr, who was contemporaneous with the discoveries of Yucatan. His account of the ceremonies of the people of Cozumel is appropriate in this place[1].

"They are," he says, "circumcised idolatours, and sacrifyce children of both kyndes to their *Zemes*, which are the images of their familiar and domesticall spirites, which they honour as goddes. When I enquired of Alaminus, the pilote, also of Francis Montegius and Portocarerius, from whence they had the children they offered in sacrifyce, they answered that they bowght them in the Islandes theraboute by exchaunge for golde and other of their trafycke. For in all this so large a space of land, the develyshe anxietie for the desyre of wicked money hath not yet oppressed the inhabitantes. They saye the same also of the Islandes lately founde,

[1] 'The Decades of the Newe Worlde, or West India. Written in the Latine tounge, by Peter Martyr, of Angleria, and translated into Englysshe by Richard Eden. Londini: in Ædibus Guilhelmi Powell. Anno MDLV. bl. l. Imprynted at London in Paule's Churchyarde, at the sign of the Byble, by Rycharde Jug.'

whereof two are named *Destam* and *Sestam*, whose inhabitants go naked; and for scarcenesse of children, sacrifice dogges, which they nourish as well for that purpose as we do counies. These dogges are dumme and cannot barke, havynge snowtes like unto foxes. Suche as they destinate to eate, they geld while they are whelpes, wherby they waxe very fat in the space of foure monethes. They reserve al the bytches for increase, and but few dogges. Oure men disswaded them from these superstitions, declarynge how they were abhominable and detested of God. They were soon perswaded, and desyred a law whiche they myght folowe. Owre men therefore declared unto them that there was only one god, which made heaven and earth, the giver of al good thynges, being of one incomprehensyble substaunce under triplicite of person. As soone as they hearde these wordes, they broke their *zemes*, and pared, scraped, and washed the pavements and waules of their temples. Owre men gave them a painted picture of the blessed vyrgine, which they placed reverently in their temple, and above it a crosse, to be honoured in the remembrance of god and man, and the salvation of mankynde. They erected also an other great crosse of wood in the toppe of the temple, whyther they oftentymes resorte together to honour the Image of the vyrgine[1]."

Of the idolatrous ceremonies on the western coast of Yucatan, the same author gives the following description.

"After this banquet, the kyng with his traine and famylie brought our men into a brode crosse way where many streats do meate. In this, they shewed them as it were a great and highe aulter buylded foure-square of

[1] The thyrde decade, fol. 156–7.

marble compacte together partly with the toughe cleye of Babilon cauled *Bitumen*, and partly with smaule stoones. It had on every syde foure steares. Uppon the altare was an image of a man made of marble: and fast by it the images of two beastes of unknowen shape, which seemed as thoughe they wolde with yanynge mouthes have torne in sunder the bealy of the mannes image. On the other syde stoode a great serpent compacte of the sayde toughe cleye and smaule stoones. This serpent beyng in length xlvii foote, and of the byg-nesse of a large oxe, seemed to devour a lyon of marble, and was al by sparcled with freshe bludde. Harde by the altare were three postes fastned in the ground, the whiche three others traversed and were susteined with stones. In this place offenders were put to death. In token whereof they saw innumerable arrows steined with bludde, sum scatered, sum lying on heapes, and sum broken: also a great number of mennes bones lying in a court or yarde were neare unto this funestal place."

Gomara, writing of Montejo's expedition, gives a similar account of the bloody sacrifices by which the religious worship of the Yucatecos was characterized; he speaks of their commerce with the Devil, and mentions the fact, noticed in all the early narratives, of the existence of crosses on their temples when the discovery of Yucatan was first made, observing that, from the latter circumstance, it has been argued that the Spaniards must have taken them there when so many left Spain after the defeat of King Roderick by the Moors[1]. In closing the account which Cogolludo gives on the au-

[1] "Todos ydolatran, sacrificando algunos hombres, y aparáceles el diablo, especial en Acuzamil, y Xicalanco: y aun despues que son christianos los ha engañado hartas vezes, y ellos han sido castigado por ello. Eran grandes santuarios, Acuzamil y Xicalanco, y cada

thority of Dr. Sanchez, Aguilar, and the Padre Lizana, he also speaks of the famous temple in the island of Cozumel where the principal idol was enshrined.

This idol, which was, he says, of singular aspect, was placed in a square temple; it was of great size, hollow, and made of burnt clay plastered with mortar. In the shoulders of the figure was a sort of sacristy, into which the priests entered by a small concealed door from behind, and, when there, replied to all the questions that were addressed to the idol by the pilgrims below. The oracles were implicitly believed, and more offerings were made at this shrine than at any other in Yucatan, and more sacrifices of blood, of birds, of dogs, and sometimes of human life.

pueblo tenia allí su templo, ó su altar, do yvan á adorar sus dioses. Y entre ellos muchas cruzes de palo y de laton. De donde arguyen algunos que muchos Españoles se fuéron á esta tierra quando la destruycion de España, hecha por los Moros en tiempo del rey Don Rodrigo."—Gomara: La Historia de las Indias, cap. liv., "De las costumbres de Yucatan."

CHAPTER IX.

EMPLOYMENT OF MISSIONARIES IN YUCATAN.—FATHER JACOB DE TESTERA.—FAVOURABLE RECEPTION OF THE FRANCISCANS.—THE INDIANS OFFER THEIR CHILDREN FOR BAPTISM.—OUTRAGES BY SOME SPANIARDS.—WITHDRAWAL OF TESTERA'S MISSION.—THE SECOND MISSION.—MISSION OF FATHER LUIS DE VILLALPANDO.—MONTEJO'S ADDRESS TO THE CACIQUES AT CAMPEACHY.—VILLALPANDO ACQUIRES THE MAYA LANGUAGE.—THE FIRST BAPTISM.—CONSPIRACY OF THE CACIQUES.—OPEN REVOLT.—BARBAROUS CRUELTY TOWARDS SPANISH PRISONERS.—INCIDENTS OF THE REVOLT.—THE ESCAPE OF DIEGO GONZALES.—SIEGE OF VALLADOLID.—THE INDIANS DEFEATED BY MONTEJO THE YOUNGER.—GENERAL PACIFICATION OF THE PENINSULA.—RENEWED EFFORTS OF THE MISSIONARIES.—NUMEROUS CONVERSIONS.—THE MISSIONARIES' LIVES ENDANGERED.—REVELATION OF THE PLOT BY A CHILD.—FEARFUL POSITION OF THE MISSIONARIES.—THEIR ACCIDENTAL RESCUE.—THE INDIANS FLY TO THE MOUNTAINS.—INTERCESSION OF VILLALPANDO AND CLEMENCY OF THE ADELANTADO.—CLERICAL AUTHORITY ESTABLISHED.

INDEPENDENTLY of the spirit of proselytism, which was ever more active in Spain than in any other part of Europe, the policy of employing religion as the most effective means of subjugating the newly-discovered countries, had always governed the Council-General of the Indies.

It has been seen, that when the expedition of Montejo was first sanctioned, the "Capitulacion" made it an express condition that one missionary at least should accompany it; and it was not without reason that the

Council animadverted severely upon the non-fulfilment of this essential feature of his contract.

Steps were accordingly taken to remedy the evil, and on the 22nd of September, 1533, a Royal Cedula was issued by the Queen in Council in Madrid[1], which set forth that, "having been informed that Francisco de Montejo, our Governor of Yucatan and Cozumel, had not accomplished that which he had been commanded to do, and had not carried with him the missionaries whom he ought to have taken with him to the said country, the same being a great impediment to the conversion of the natives, which is our principal desire," it decreed that a Mission[2] should forthwith be sent, and instructions to that effect were forwarded to Don Antonio de Mendoza, the Viceroy of Hispaniola, which island was the head-quarters of the Franciscan religious establishments beyond the seas.

Father Jacob de Testera, a Frenchman by birth, a man, says Cogolludo, "most zealous for the salvation of souls," volunteered his services on this occasion, being at the time Custodio of the Province of Santo Evangelio, of Mexico. He took with him four assistants, and proceeded to Champoton, and on his arrival at that place sent a message to the Indians, to the effect that he came with peaceable intentions, without arms, and solely for the purpose of bringing them to the knowledge of the true God.

This message was conveyed by a deputation of Mexicans, and the natives, after much consultation, received

[1] It is scarcely necessary to remind the reader that, although Queen Joanna, the mother of the Emperor Charles V., was utterly incapable of attending to public business (being in fact insane), her name was always associated with, and preceded, that of her son in the government of Spain, as long as she lived.

[2] Cogolludo, lib. ii. cap. xii. p. 102.

it favourably, and gave leave to the Franciscans to enter their country. As soon as they had done so, the Indian caciques voluntarily brought their idols to be burnt, and then offered their children, that they might be taught the new faith; those children whom, according to the words of Las Casas, "they loved more than the light of their own eyes." The Indians further agreed to recognize the authority of the King of Spain in their dominions, "twelve or fifteen lords of many vassals and much territory" becoming surety for the performance of this agreement. Their conversion was however delayed by an outrage committed by a party of some thirty Spaniards, who, under the pretext of taking away idols, captured a great many Indians, both male and female. Father Jacob de Testera, dreading the effect which such violence must produce in the minds of his intended converts, tried to induce the thirty Spaniards to leave the country, but the Indians became indignant, believing that the Franciscans had broken their promises and endeavoured to kill them. Apprehending their danger, Testera and his companions left Champoton by night, and had proceeded some distance from thence on their return to Mexico, when messengers overtook them from the caciques, who, having learnt in the meantime that the Franciscans were innocent of the outrages committed by their armed countrymen, sent after them to beg them to return. They did so, and "were received like angels[1]" by the Indians, who were prodigal of their services; and all might have gone well, but for the conduct of the thirty Spaniards, who refused to quit the country, and were

[1] "Tornáronse á su tierra, y fuéron recibidos de los Indios como ángeles."—Cogolludo, lib. ii. cap. xiii. p. 105.

continually inflicting injuries upon the natives[1]. Fearing therefore that these wrongs might one day be resented on themselves, the Franciscans, after a stay of four or five months, resolved to return to Mexico, and thus ended the first religious mission.

The second body of friars who went to Yucatan were five in number. Their names are not mentioned, but we learn from Torquemada[2] that they were sent from Mexico in the year 1537, by Father Antonio de Ciudad Rodrigo, at that time Provincial of Santo Evangelio. They first visited Guacasualco, proceeded thence to Tabasco and Xicalanco, and passed onward to Champoton and Campeachy. Their stay in the country was about two years; and although at the expiration of the period the mission was relinquished, they reported very favourably of the capacity of the Indians to receive the true faith, and of their willingness to adopt it.

An interval of nine years appears to have passed before any other formal missions were sent; though wherever the Spaniards founded cities, religious establishments were necessarily prominent features of their occupation; and it is not till the year 1546 that we find the conversion of the Indians once more the paramount object of the new occupants of their country.

In that year however a vigorous effort was made throughout the vast territory which during the last half-century the Spaniards had acquired in the New World, and no less than a hundred and fifty missionaries were despatched from Spain. Twelve of this body were established in Guatemala, Father Torribio de Montolinia being their Commissary, with orders to detach some of

[1] "No cessaban de hazer agravios á los Indios."—*Cogolludo.*

[2] De la Monarquía Indiana, lib. xix. cap. 13. (Madrid, 1723.)

their number to Yucatan. These orders were communicated by the Commissary to the Adelantado, who was at that time at Chiápa, and on the point of returning to the peninsula. The intelligence gave him great satisfaction, as he clearly saw that the absolute pacification of the country could be expected from religious exertions alone. He set out therefore for his Government, it having been settled that he should be accompanied by Father Luis de Villalpando, a commissary, Father Juan de Albalato, Angel Maldonado, Lorenzo de Bienvenida, and Melchor de Benavente, priests, and Father Juan de Herrera, lay-brother. It was determined that Bienvenida should enter the province on the eastern side, and he was accordingly sent from Guatemala to the Gulf of Dulce, whence he sailed to Bakhalal. The rest of the missionaries remained in Guatemala a short time after Bienvenida's departure; but when they reached Chiapa they found that the Adelantado had set out for Yucatan a month before. It was therefore upon their own resources that the Fathers had to depend for the prosecution of their journey, and many difficulties and dangers attended their progress across the country that lies between Chiapa and Tabasco, in the course of which they passed by the famous ruins of Palenque[1]. They arrived however in safety at San Francisco de Campeche (Campeachy), where they found the Adelantado, his son, and many noble

[1] "Como no le halláron allí, partiéron con brevedad en prosecucion de su viage, padeciendo grandes trabajos y cansancios, por ser aquella tierra asperíssima, grandes cuestas, y pantanosas, que aun andadas en buenas mulas, es penosíssimo viage; y lo restante, en baxando á Tabasco, á los rios por el pueblo que llaman el Palenque, lo mas es cenagal ó atolladeros á cada passo, tierra caliente, mosquitos sin número de dia y de noche, incomodidades que dan bien á entender lo que padecerian viniendo á pie y descalços tan largo viage, como trecientas leguas de estas calidades, que ay desde Guatemala á estas provincias."—Cogolludo, lib. v. cap. 1.

Conquistadors, who had gone thither to receive Montejo in his capacity of Governor of the province. They were warmly welcomed by all, and in particular by the Adelantado, who received them into his own house, that he might more freely confer with them on the best means of effecting the conversion of the Indians. Montejo, who appears to have been most anxious to make up for his neglect in leaving Spain without a proper staff of missionaries, caused the principal caciques of the district to be assembled at Campeachy, and addressed them in an elaborate speech, in which he told them for what purpose the Franciscan Fathers had arrived, and called upon them to pay them the same respect and obedience as they would have shown to the Emperor himself had he been present. The Indians attentively listened to this discourse, and manifested the liveliest desire to receive the doctrines which the missionaries came to propagate.

But Villalpando soon discovered that his party were too few in number to make any rapid progress, and it was agreed that Father Juan de Albalato should be sent to Spain to obtain a reinforcement. He was accordingly despatched thither; and while the Adelantado went on to Merida, the seat of government, Villalpando remained at Campeachy, where he founded a convent, which he dedicated to St. Francis, and then with his companions zealously set to work to convert the natives, learning their language, says Cogolludo, with a rapidity which declared it to be a miracle wrought by the Divine Majesty[1]. The first Indian whom they baptized was the Cacique of Campeachy, and they gave him the title and name of Don Diego Ná. He also, on his part, soon learned the Castilian tongue, and was of great service to

[1] "En que parecia obró la Magestad Divina una cosa milagrosa."

the Fathers, as their interpreter, with the Indians of remoter districts; he showed indeed so much aptitude to learn, that the Franciscans even taught him Latin[1].

"But," observes Cogolludo, "without doubt the enemy of the human race became jealous of seeing himself despoiled of the authority which he had exercised for so many centuries, and therefore stirred up the minds of the Kupules and the inhabitants of Bakhalal against the Spaniards, in such sort that they were in great danger of losing all the fruits of their labours." The peril arose in this manner.

Of all those who yielded to the authority of the Spaniards, the tribe called the Ah-Kupúles, who inhabited the eastern provinces of Yucatan, had manifested the greatest repugnance. They had been taught too severe a lesson by the military prowess of their conquerors to venture to meet them openly in arms again, and their only resource now was to plot in secret. United with the Ah-Kupúles in this conspiracy were the caciques of Zotula, Yaxcabá, and the chiefs of various neighbouring tribes,—the same who had revolted against the authority of Tutul Xiu, and cut off the heads of certain ambassadors whom he sent to counsel them to render obedience to the Spaniards, when they possessed themselves of the city of Mayapan. The conspirators kept their designs with the closest secresy until the 9th of November, 1546, on which day the revolt broke forth, in different parts, as had been previously agreed on. The first victims to the vengeance of the Indians were two brothers, named Juan and Diego Cansino, living at the time in the town of Chemáyo, who were so little suspicious of any plot against them, that they were made prisoners

[1] "Le hallaron tan hábil, que le enseñáron la latinidad."

without arms, and almost without resistance. Deep was the hatred which these eastern tribes bore to the Spaniards, and they showed it on this occasion in the lingering death to which the two brothers were consigned. They fastened them to two crosses, and withdrawing the distance of a bow-shot, discharged their arrows at them till their bodies were filled with the shafts, accompanying every murderous flight with all the blasphemies they could devise against the religion of the sufferers. This horrible torture lasted throughout the day, and when the sun went down the martyred men knew by their failing strength and fast-flowing blood that death was at hand. In the last hour of their agony they commended themselves to the Virgin, faintly sang the 'Salve Regina,' and yielded up their spirits to their Creator. When the Indians saw that they were dead, they took them down from the crosses and cut off their heads, which they set upon stakes, and bore aloft as tokens of victory; nor did this act alone content them: the limbs of the unhappy victims were dismembered and sent far and wide amongst the people, that they might know how the work of revolt had begun.

Simultaneously with the murder of the brothers Cansino, a party of Indians assailed the encomienda of Captain Hernando de Aguilar, which was called Cehake, distant about twelve leagues from the new city of Valladolid, and having captured him, they put him to death the same night, cutting off his head, legs, and arms, which they sent round to their confederates, to excite them to similar acts. Another Spaniard, named Juan Lopez de Mena, living in his encomienda at Paztemax, was more fortunate than Aguilar, for, hearing the approach of the Indians, he set fire to his house on all

sides, and in the confusion made his escape, leaving behind him however two Spanish boys and some Indians, his servants, whom the rebels ruthlessly slew. He succeeded in reaching Valladolid.

An attempt was also made by the tribe of Calotmul upon the encomienda of Diego Gonzales de Ayala, but he, being armed, made so valorous a defence, with only a single Negro slave to back him, that he forced his way on horseback through the multitude of Indians who surrounded his house, and, with the Negro behind him, galloped off on the road to the city, closely pursued by his foes. After a time his horse became exhausted, and he was compelled to stop for awhile, which gave the Indians time to get up with him: for their mutual safety the Negro dismounted, and together they faced their pursuers with so much courage that the latter fell back, giving them time to mount again and increase the distance between them. Cogolludo adds a curious incident to this account of the flight of Diego Gonzales. "There is," he says, "on this road a fruit-tree of the kind named Zapótes, which is now called the 'tree of the hook' (it was shown to me when passing by to visit the convents in that part), because on this occasion the Conquistador, riding up very much fatigued, and feeling, though the Indians were close behind him, that his best defence lay in the swiftness of his flight, he unbraced his shield, and hung it on one of the branches. Some people say," continues the historian, "that he hung his saddlebags there; but he left his house so suddenly and amid so much danger, that it does not appear likely he should encumber himself with saddlebags, but rather with arms to strike and defend himself with[1]."

[1] "Ay en el camino un árbol frutal, se llaman Zapótes, que oy

The entire number of Spaniards who were killed in different places was sixteen, and the murderers offered the greater part of the dead bodies as sacrifices to their ancient idols. "The names of those who fell," says Cogolludo, "that I have been able to collect, besides the three I have mentioned, were Juan de Villanueva, who had been a *maestro de campo* at the time of the conquest, Juan de la Torre, Caudillo, Pedro Zurujano, Juan de Azamar, Bernardo or Bernardino de Villagomez, and Pedro Duran: to them and to the rest God has given glory!"

The Indians having done all the mischief in their power in every township, now united their forces to attack the city of Valladolid. The Spaniards who were garrisoned there, learning what had occurred, prepared for their defence, and sent for assistance to the city of Merida; their force consisting of only twenty men, with the addition of the refugees Juan de la Mena and Diego Gonzales de Ayala. But these brave Conquistadors had no intention of remaining behind their walls for the attack of their enemies, and, without waiting for the reinforcements from Merida, boldly sallied out to meet the Indians, who, dismayed at the courage of the Castilians, advanced no nearer to the city. A skirmish however ensued, in which the Indians suffered great loss, while on the part of the Spaniards not a man was killed, and the latter retired in good order into the city.

In the meantime the Spaniards of Merida, to the

dia le nombran el árbol de Garabato (y á mí le mostráron passando á visitar los conventos de aquel territorio), porque en esta ocasion, viéndole este Conquistador cansado, algo lexos de los Indios, y siendo la mayor defensa huir con mas presteza, colgó la adarga de una rama de él. Algunos dizen que fuéron unas alforjas; pero salida tan repentina y peligrosa, no parece daria lugar á buscar mas alforjas que arma con que ofender y defenderse."

number of forty soldiers, advanced under the command of the Alcalde Francisco Tamayo Pachcco, to succour Valladolid. They found the place nearly surrounded by Indians, and although the garrison had strongly fortified themselves, the increasing numbers of the enemy rendered their position very precarious. On the departure of Pacheco the other Alcalde of Merida, named Rodrigo Alvarez, sent word of the outbreak to the Adelantado, who was at that moment absent from the city, and on the receipt of the intelligence, measures were taken to réduce the Indians, the command being given to Francisco de Montejo the younger, who, with several experienced captains and a force of forty-nine soldiers, threw themselves into Valladolid, and awaited the opportunity of giving the enemy battle. For some days the combined force remained inactive, expecting to see the rebels retire; but as the Indians showed no intention of doing so, nor desisted from their hostile demonstrations, Montejo began to fear that the honour of his country was endangered, since the presence of so many Spaniards was without effect, and he resolved to act upon the offensive, though his own desire, and that of the Adelantado, had been to induce the Indians to disperse without having recourse to arms. Another of those bloody conflicts then took place, in which, although the rebels were worsted, the loss to the Spaniards was very great, no less than twenty Conquistadors being slain, besides upwards of five hundred of the Indians who had remained faithful to them; for the enemy fought with a desperation which was inspired by the recollection that they were seeking to regain their liberty. Yet the battle was so fatal to them that they did not venture to hold their ground after Montejo had withdrawn into the city, but

broke up their camp and retired within their own territory, resolved to defend it by all the means in their power.

Relieved from this anxiety, the Spanish captains divided their forces, and marched upon those places where their countrymen had been so cruelly put to death, and although they met with considerable resistance, it was not long before the disturbed districts in the neighbourhood of Valladolid were again reduced to order. Francisco de Montejo, the Adelantado's son, who had the supreme command, showed great lenity towards all the prisoners that were taken; and this mild policy went much further towards pacificating the country, than if vengeance had been taken for the atrocities which the Indians had committed.

The insurrection had not however been confined to the province of Valladolid, but found numerous partisans in that of Chetemal, within the jurisdiction of Salamanca de Bakhalal, where a Spanish captain, named Martin Rodriguez, was attacked by the Indians in his encomienda at Chamlacao, and murdered. Juan de Aguilar took command of an expedition against the insurgents, and proceeded to Chamlacao,—a place very difficult of access, as it was situated on a small island in the midst of a broad lake, and was moreover well fortified. But, influenced less by this consideration than the desire to effect his object peaceably, and thus save the effusion of blood on both sides, Aguilar was well disposed to treat with the rebels, and, the wife of the Cacique of Chamlacao having been taken prisoner by some of the Spaniards of Salamanca, an opportunity was afforded him of doing so. He therefore sent back the cacique's wife, and her testimony in favour of the honourable treatment

she had experienced from the Spaniards operated so strongly upon the mind of the revolted chief that he at once made his submission, and his threatened resistance was changed to a most pacific welcome, Aguilar and his troops being received as guests in the stronghold of Chamlacao.

With the pacification of the eastern part of Yucatan this episode of revolt was brought to a close, after a duration of about four months, and from that time forward no further attempt was made by the Indians to recover their independence, and the work of religious conversion was again resumed.

It had prospered on the western shores of the peninsula, and Father Luis de Villalpando now devoted himself to its extension in the interior, regardless of the toils and privations which were to be encountered. Every difficulty was met with firmness and patience, and the mild persuasive doctrines which the missionaries preached, enforced by the blameless character of their lives, operated most favourably upon the minds of the Indians, who came in numbers to the baptismal font, and were received in the bosom of the Church.

From the mountainous region bordering upon Campeachy, Father Luis de Villalpando proceeded, at the invitation of the Adelantado, to Merida, where he founded another convent, and then sending out missions to all the neighbouring caciques, assembled them in that city to hear his exposition of the doctrines of the Christian faith. The result was not different from that which had attended his efforts elsewhere. The Indians listened and believed, and with simple confidence consented to place their children in the hands of the worthy Fathers, that they might be taught the true religion; nor was it

long before Villalpando had mustered upwards of a thousand neophytes. The baptism of several of the principal caciques speedily followed, and a secure foundation was laid for the extension of Christianity throughout the land.

Still, in the wild and rugged districts remote from the capital, it was not without great peril to their lives that the missionaries prosecuted their labours. The Adelantado was very desirous that the provinces which had formerly owned subjection to Tutul Xiu, and which were situated south of Merida, should become the scene of religious conversion, and in conformity with his wish, Fathers Villalpando and Benavente set out, in their usual guise, barefooted and staff in hand, towards the close of the year 1547. They first directed their steps to the township of Mani, in the heart of a vast sierra; here they were well received, the people flocking around them in great numbers, and rendering their assistance to build them a house and church. Besides their spiritual emancipation, a great object which the missionaries had in view was to release the Indians from the state of slavery in which their caciques held them, and their most strenuous arguments were directed towards this end. This alarmed the caciques, and they took counsel together how to frustrate a project which threatened to deprive them of their temporal authority; the importance of every chief being in proportion to the number of slaves who acknowledged him for their lord. They came then secretly to the resolution of taking the lives of the missionaries, and, the better to accomplish their purpose, decided upon burning them alive in the building which their people had raised for the celebration of Christian worship when first the Fathers established themselves in the sierra. The

period fixed upon for the perpetration of this deed was the 28th of September, 1548, the eve of St. Michael, and the missionaries remained wholly unsuspicious of the plot combined against them.

It chanced, however, that on the day named for the execution of the murderous project, an Indian child recently baptized came to Father Villalpando to be catechized. But before the catechism began, "Priest," said the boy, "answer me a question which I wish to put to you." "Ask it," replied the Father; and the boy continued: "which is better," he demanded, "to live or to die?" "It is better to live," returned Villalpando, "because to live is our natural state, while death is the inheritance acquired by sin." "Then, Father," said the child, "if you wish to live you must fly hence, for the chiefs amongst our people have determined upon your death, and this very night you will be burnt in the church if you remain in it."

Father Villalpando did not betray any emotion at this intelligence, but thanked the child, telling him that he was in the hands of God, and desiring him to go back to his parents that night, and return to see him on the following day. The child expressed his doubts about finding him alive, but Villalpando dismissed him with his blessing, and then repaired to his coadjutor, to whom he related the terrible news he had just learnt. Father Benavente was greatly moved at hearing it, but Villalpando sustained him with words of comfort, and together they went to the church, where, throwing themselves at the foot of the cross, they petitioned for strength from on high to support them in the coming hour of trial. They passed the evening in prayer and religious conference; Father Villalpando, who was the most resigned,

omitting no argument to reconcile his companion to the martyrdom which awaited them both.

While thus occupied the night drew on, and about the eleventh hour a noise was heard as of a crowd approaching; and, from one of the windows of the building, the Fathers saw a great multitude of Indians, armed with bows, arrows, and darts, and brandishing lighted torches. They drew near the church, and surrounded it, and, for a whole hour, continued to cry out that they meant to burn it to the ground and kill the missionaries, if they attempted to escape. Meanwhile the two Fathers remained perfectly impassive, proffering neither speech nor gesture, but silently engaged in prayer; and the Indians,—awed perhaps by the calm resignation of their intended victims, or repenting of their resolve,—refrained from carrying their threats into execution, though from time to time they assailed them with the most injurious epithets. By degrees however their exclamations abated, their rage evaporated, and, shortly after midnight, the Fathers were left alone in the church, to offer up their matin prayers to Saint Michael for their deliverance. By a providential circumstance, the day had scarcely dawned, when Father Villalpando and his companion were aware of the noise of horses' hoofs, and of words uttered in the Spanish language. These sounds were caused by the accidental arrival of a party of their countrymen, who had been despatched by the Adelantado to a place called Petu, fourteen leagues further to the eastward, to quell a disturbance there, but having missed their way had happened upon the township of Mani, while the missionaries were chanting their matin song. There was great joy on both sides at the meeting which then took place, when the Fathers recounted

the danger they had escaped; and the new-comers joined them in singing a Te Deum of thanks and praise.

At the accustomed hour of morning service, the bell was rung as usual for assembling the Indians to prayer; but no one appeared except the child who, on the previous day, had warned Villalpando of the plot against his life. He said that all the Indians, fearing the armed Spaniards, whose arrival they had witnessed, had fled to the mountains, but that he had come to see if Villalpando was still alive. He was fondly caressed by the good Father, who related the story to the Spaniards and their leader Caudillo, and it was by him communicated to the Adelantado at Merida, who in conjunction with Tutul Xiu, the cacique of Mani, immediately adopted measures for punishing the chiefs who had imagined the deaths of the missionaries. Twenty-seven of the principal conspirators were taken, and conducted to Merida, when they confessed the crime of which they were accused, and were sentenced to be burnt. The Adelantado resolved to carry the sentence into effect; the fire was made ready, and the Indians, bound hand and foot, were brought out to undergo their punishment, when Father Villalpando, throwing himself upon his knees before Montejo, earnestly besought him to spare their lives. It was with difficulty that the Governor was brought to listen to the missionary's prayer, but at last he yielded to the eloquent pleadings of Villalpando, and instead of being condemned to the flames, the culprits were transferred to the religious care of the inmates of the convent of Merida.

The consequences of this clemency were greatly advantageous to the cause of religion, and when Father Villalpando went back to Mani with the prisoners,

whose safe return had never been dreamt of, nothing could exceed the gratitude and affection which the people showed him. Numbers came to be baptized, and amongst them the chief cacique, who took the name and designation of Don Francisco Xiu; a convent also was built at Mani.

Shortly after this event the missionary establishment in Yucatan was strengthened by arrivals, not only from Mexico, but from the mother-country; and the first "Capitulo Custodial" was held at Merida, on the 29th of September, 1549, under the authority of Father Juan de la Puerta, the Commissary-General for Mexico. Villalpando was elected Custodio of the province, and a number of conventual appointments were made.

The religious establishments of Yucatan having now been fixed upon a firm basis, the ecclesiastical authorities applied themselves to the administration of the laws, by which, in their spiritual as well as in their temporal relations, the Indians were henceforward to be governed. But before we trace the further progress of government in the northern division of the peninsula, attention must be directed to the attempts which were being made to effect the conversion of the inhabitants at the southern extremity, which now belongs to Guatemala.

CHAPTER X.

BARTHOLOMEW DE LAS CASAS.—HIS PROPOSITION FOR CONVERTING THE INDIANS.—HE UNDERTAKES A MISSION.—THE TERMS FOR WHICH HE STIPULATED.—THE ROYAL CEDULA.—THE CANTICLES, OR SACRED ROMANCES OF THE MISSIONARIES.—TEACHING OF THE ENVOYS.—FAVOURABLE RECEPTION OF THEIR PROPOSALS.—THE FIRST MASS PREACHED BY FATHER LUIS CANCER.—THE CONVERTED CACIQUE.—DEPARTURE OF LAS CASAS WITH PEDRO DE ANGULO.—THEY PROCEED TO COBAN AND RETURN.—PROJECT FOR CONVERTING THE INDIANS.—FORMATION OF TOWNS.—THE CONVERTED CACIQUE RECEIVED AT SANTIAGO.—LAS CASAS AND RODRIGO DE LADRADA GO AGAIN TO COBAN.—THE "COUNTRY OF WAR" CHANGED TO THAT OF "TRUE PEACE."—FURTHER EXTENSION OF CHRISTIANITY.—DEATH OF PEDRO DE ANGULO, THE FIRST BISHOP OF VERA PAZ.

But while the Franciscans of Hispaniola had been endeavouring to establish the Christian religion in the north of Yucatan, the zealous missionaries, who had already extended their labours from Mexico to the confines of Guatemala, were not unmindful of the existence of a barbarous people in the south of that province, on whose idolatrous ignorance they were anxious to shed the light of the true faith.

Foremost amongst the energetic and devoted men was the celebrated Bartholomew de las Casas, whose humanity in defending the Indians was no less conspicuous than his zeal for their conversion.

In his famous work, 'De unico Vocationis modo,' he

had, according to his custom, severely censured the violence of the Conquistadors, and declared that the only effectual way to convert the Indians was by the employment of mild and persuasive means. This book, which was widely circulated in New Spain, fell into the hands of the Spanish inhabitants of Santiago de Guatemala, where Las Casas was then residing, and they, reading in it their own condemnation, retorted upon him the necessity of giving a real meaning to his words by practising the doctrines which he had preached. Las Casas at once accepted the defiance.

At this time the only part of the Central American continent which had not been subjugated by the Spaniards, was the country which Cortes had traversed on his march to Honduras. The southern district of this territory was known as the province of Tutzulutlan, or, more popularly, as the Tierra de Guerra, because no less than three expeditions had been sent from Guatemala to reduce the inhabitants, all of which had ended in discomfiture and disgrace. It was to convert this fierce and warlike people that Bartholomew de las Casas now offered his services, relying solely on the efficacy of the word of God and the truths of the Gospel. His preparations were made with the utmost simplicity, and, like the apostolic teachers, he went forth, incited to his task by no hope of present or prospective advantages, but stimulated only by the desire to labour in his Father's vineyard. He insisted however upon certain stipulations before he took his departure, and these were that the pacification of the wild tribes amongst whom he was about to venture should be attempted without force of arms, or any armed interference, on the part of the Spaniards; that no molestation should be offered to the

converted Indians; and that when the latter were collected into townships they should be permitted peaceably to enjoy their liberty, under the protection of the Most Catholic King; for, added Las Casas and the companions whom he had chosen to accompany him on his mission,—the Father Rodrigo de Ladrada and Pedro de Angulo,—"we hope, by the goodness of God, that they will not only embrace the faith, but that they will not refuse to pay a tribute to the Crown of Castile."

These stipulations were agreed to by Alonso Maldonado, who signed a *Cedula* on behalf of the King and the Council of the Indies, dated the 2nd of May, 1537, prohibiting all Spaniards, under the heaviest penalties, from interfering for five years from that date[1].

As soon as the Convention was agreed on, Las Casas and his Dominican brethren, with whom was also associated Father Luis Cancer, set about their arduous undertaking, and the commencement of their work was characterized by a singular proceeding. Being well ac-

[1] The Governor's reasons for acceding to the request of Las Casas are set forth as follows:—"Y porque *temeys* que despues que vos tragays los dichos Indios é Provincias de Paz, y á servivio del Rey, *que si se encomendassen á Españoles, que serian mal tratados, como le suelen ser, y estorbados que no recibiessen la Fé y dotrina Christiana.* Y por tanto me requeristes de parte de Dios y de su Magestad, que si yo en su Real nombre os prometiesse, é certificasse, que todas las Provincias, é Indias dellas que truxeredéres de paz á sujecion de su Magestad, los pornia en su Real cabeça, y no los encomendaria ni daria á ningun Español, que os porniades en ello, y los asseguraríades y trabajaríades cõ todas vuestras fuerzas á los traer á lo suso dicho. *E que si esto no os prometiesse, que no entẽderíades en ello: porque dezis que no esperays sacar fruto ninguno, ni los poder traer á q̃ sean Christianos, ni á que sean dotados de buenas costumbres.* Y porque esta es obra de muy señalado servicio y gloria de Dios, para su Magestad, y bien la salvacion de los naturales Indios des las Provincias, y es manifiesto que su Magestad no dessea mas otra cosa que, que estas gentes infieles seã Christianos y se conviertan á Dios. Por ende digo, y os prometo y doy mi palabra en nõbre y de parte de su Magestad," etc.—Historia de la Provincia de Chiapa y Guatemala, por Fr. Antonio de Remesal, lib. iii. cap. ix. (Madrid, 1620.)

quainted with the language of the country, they composed, in the Guatemalian dialect, a familiar narrative, in the form of a canticle or metrical history, in which mention was made of the creation of the world, the sins of our first parents, their expulsion from Paradise, the redemption of the human race by the death of Christ, his passion and ascension, his coming to judge the world, and the rewards and punishments of a future life. It was, says Remesal, a very comprehensive work, and was divided in its pauses and different versification after the manner of the Castilians[1].

Having arranged this sacred romance, Las Casas selected four Indian merchants of the province of Guatemala, who several times a year visited different parts of the country, travelling with goods to Zacapula and Quiché, and well known and welcomed wherever they bought and sold. The reverend fathers carefully taught these verses to the Indian merchants, who were Christians, and had them set to music, so that they might be sung to the natives, and having provided them with a supply of scissors, knives, small looking-glasses, bells, and other objects which the Indians are fond of, despatched envoys to the "Tierra de Guerra," to prepare the way for their own mission.

The Indian merchants proceeded at once to the dwelling of a powerful cacique with whom they were acquainted, and who received them very favourably. He was pleased with the objects they brought, and interested in their songs, which had for him and the people about him all the charm that attached to novelty. The Indians had never heard such musical instruments as those which

[1] "Era esta obra muy larga, y assí la division en sus pausas y diferencia de versos al modo de los Castellanos."—Remesal, lib. iii. cap. xi.

now greeted their ears, and the religious couplets (*coplas*) affected them by the glimpses they gave of a loftier faith than they had hitherto conceived; and as they listened, the cacique gave orders that all other arrangements should be suspended the while. For eight days these quasi-dramatic representations lasted, the cacique manifesting the utmost curiosity to know the meaning of all he heard. The Indian merchants explained to him all they knew, and when their knowledge failed them referred to their own teachers, who, they told him, were fully capable of affording every information.

"We have amongst us," they said, "learned men, the ministers of the great God who has made heaven and earth, whose intentions are entirely pacific, who go unarmed, who seek neither gold nor silver, nor anything that belongs to those who welcome them. So far from desiring to rule over the people they wish to come amongst, or to do any wrong to the inhabitants, their rule is invariably to protect them, because their only desire is to make them happy. And two out of the number will joyfully teach you, without fee or reward, all you desire to learn."

The cacique and his friends listened with much satisfaction to this intelligence, and hastened to reply that he would not only willingly receive the members of the mission, but that a deputation, praying them to come, should be sent; the brother of the cacique placing himself at its head. Nor did he make this proposal without immediately carrying it into execution; and the missionaries were as much delighted as surprised at the success which had attended their experiment.

The cacique's brother, laden with a suitable offering, was gladly welcomed at Santiago; not for the value of

what he brought, but for the invitation of which he was the bearer. He admired all he saw in the city, gazed with reverent wonder on the ceremonies to which he was admitted, and returned to his countrymen deeply impressed with the religious worship of "the bearded men." Immediately after his departure, Father Luis Cancer was charged with conveying a present to the cacique in return, which consisted not only of curious articles of Spanish manufacture, but of a number of crucifixes and images, as emblems of the religion whose rites his countrymen had witnessed. The holy Father was received with general acclamation by the Indians wherever he appeared, and when he reached the principal village, he was welcomed by the cacique in person, with every demonstration of reverence and admiration. By his orders an edifice was set aside as a church, and Father Luis Cancer celebrated mass that same day before an attentive and wondering congregation, who were particularly struck with the cleanliness of the Christian sacerdotal garments, which formed so great a contrast to the wretched dirty rags of their own native priests. Father Luis Cancer continued to preach with great earnestness during several successive days, taking care at the same time to confirm the caciques in the assurance which had been obtained from the Governor of Guatemala, that, in embracing the faith of the Spaniards, the Indian proselytes should have all their social rights respected. The cacique, in consequence, soon became a convert to the new religion, brought all his idols to be burnt, and was, with a number of his people, formally received into the pale of the Roman Catholic Church. Father Luis Cancer then returned to Guatemala with the glad intelligence of his successful mission.

On the receipt of news so encouraging, Las Casas decided upon proceeding at once to the "Tierra de Guerra," taking for his fellow-labourer Father Pedro de Angulo, who thoroughly understood the Tutzulutlan language, with which however he was himself not unacquainted; and these two set out together towards the end of October, 1537, when the periodical rains had ceased[1].

In the meantime the converted cacique, who had received the baptismal name of Juan, gave a striking proof of the sincerity with which he had embraced the Christian faith. His brother, the same who had been sent to Santiago, was betrothed to the daughter of the Cacique of Coban, and great preparations were being made for the marriage. The territories of the two chiefs were divided by a river, and it was intended, as was customary, to celebrate the passage of the bride by the performance of religious ceremonies and the sacrifice of parrots and other birds to the idols. But before the wedding-train had crossed the river, the cacique Don Juan sent messengers to say that they might reckon on an earnest welcome, as the preparations for their reception would convince them, but that he begged they would forgo the old ceremonies, which were vain and idle, and prompted by the evil spirit, and rather adore the true and only God, the knowledge of whom had been taught him by the strangers.

Great was the astonishment and indignation of the Cacique of Coban when this message was delivered, and,

[1] Father Touron, in his 'Histoire Générale de l'Amérique depuis sa découverte' (Paris, 12mo, 1768), omits the name of Las Casas from this expedition, and substitutes that of Luis Cancer, though, with the text of Remesal before him, he must have read his author very carelessly. He has confounded the two expeditions together.

taking back the bride, he hastily retraced his steps to his own capital, resolving upon an immediate war with the Cacique of Tutzulutlan, to avenge the insult thus offered to himself and his religion. But when he had taken counsel of his friends, and considered the impolicy of breaking off with a chief so powerful as his neighbour for so slight a cause, he changed his purpose, and sent back for reply that the sacrifices should not take place, and that whatever orders the Cacique of Tutzulutlan gave should be promptly obeyed.

It was in the month of December that Bartholomew de las Casas and Pedro de Angulo arrived at the village of Don Juan, who received them with much distinction. The Fathers set to work at once upon the objects of their mission, preaching before great numbers of the people. They visited the whole province in perfect security, undeterred by the badness of the roads and the dangerous passes; and wherever they went the Indians manifested great affection for them, bringing presents, and requesting to be admitted into the Christian Church[1]. On reaching the confines of Tutzulutlan they expressed their intention of proceeding into Coban, the real "Tierra de Guerra," and though the cacique Don Juan opposed the measure, fearing that it might be dangerous, they strenuously persisted; the friendly chief gave them, therefore, a guard of sixty chosen men, to whom he entrusted the lives and safety of the Fathers, holding them responsible with their own lives for any accident that might befall the mission-

[1] There is a curious passage in the text of Remesal which somewhat qualifies the value of a part at least of the admiration which the Fathers inspired. He says: "Y unos los miravan por lo que eran, y otros *con golosina de comerselos*, pareciéndoles que tendrian buen gusto con salsa de Chila." "Some admired them for what they were, and others with a gluttonous desire to eat them, fancying that they would taste well with Chile sauce!"

aries. But the escort were as willing to go, as the cacique was to send them, and declared their desire to provide the Fathers with everything they stood in want of, and, thus accompanied, Las Casas and his companion set out. The Indians kept their promise, serving them with the greatest punctuality and obedience, and performing their messages so swiftly that, says Remesal, "it seemed as if they travelled through the air[1]." The expedition was a very successful one, and, greatly satisfied with the result, the Fathers returned to the dwelling of the cacique Don Juan.

But the missionaries felt that, as long as the Indians remained scattered over the country, the work of conversion must be slow, and one of their principal objects was, therefore, to collect them into towns, that they might gradually acquire notions of civilization, and be under more immediate supervision. Las Casas communicated this desire to Don Juan, who was quite ready to aid his efforts, as the result would be to his own advantage; but he represented that there would be great difficulties in the attempt to induce the inhabitants to alter their old customs.

The missionaries found that such was the case, and it needed all the confidence and affection which the natives entertained toward them, to bring about the change. The secret cave, or the distant mountain, where the Indian first saw the light, were to him sacred, and he thought of them as his only home; a wandering life had moreover become so habitual, that he shrank with aver-

[1] "Yendo y viniendo á los mensages con tanto presteza que parecia *que caminavan por el ayre.*" This swiftness of foot appears to have suggested ideas amongst the Spaniards that the Indians were rather wild animals than men, for in a marginal note Remesal alludes to a prevalent opinion "que los Indios *no eran hombres.*"

sion from the idea of living in community with others. The cacique exerted himself personally in the cause, and assembling a number of his people, pointed out to them the advantages of living together, with so much success, that they agreed to abandon their huts and wild retreats. The Fathers endeavoured to enforce the arguments of the cacique, but their mode of reasoning not being so well understood by the Indians, the latter retracted their promises, and dispersed to their woods and valleys much dejected[1]. But Las Casas and Angulo were not disheartened; they laboured unremittingly, and at length succeeded in persuading a small number of the tribe of Rabinal to erect their dwellings in one spot, to which the same name was given. About a hundred houses were thus raised, and a church was straightway built, in which sermons were preached, and mass was performed daily[2]. The ceremonies of the new faith were ever captivating to the simple Indians, and the example spread, which was set at Rabinal. By degrees they began to draw together, and the internal police and government of these small towns were regulated after the manner which prevailed in the larger cities of Mexico; care was taken to select their judges and superiors from those amongst their own tribes whose age, or birth, or natural qualifications fitted them for the office; laws were established in conformity with the wants and character of the natives, and

[1] "Saliéron con las manos en la cabeça."—*Remesal.*

[2] Some conception of the nature of the labours of these estimable men may be formed from the following passage in Torquemada's 'Historia de la Monarquía Indiana' (fol. Madrid, 1723), when he describes their missionary avocations: "They preached," he says, "first, to the Mexican Indians; secondly, to the Matlatcintas; and thirdly, to the Spaniards. And many times, after all this work, they sang masses, baptized children, which were very numerous, and interred the dead. And with all this they contented themselves with a pitcher of fresh water, and never desired to drink wine," etc.

at the head of all the newly-made authorities was their own cacique.

At this juncture Las Casas sent word to Santiago that it was desirable Father Luis Cancer should join him. The zealous priest readily answered the call, and declared his willingness to penetrate still further into Coban,—a proposition which was hailed with great satisfaction by Las Casas and Angulo, and they all three earnestly began to make themselves masters of the language of that country.

But previous to extending the mission into the heart of the Tierra de Guerra, it appeared advisable to Las Casas to return to Guatemala to consult with the bishop of that diocese on the best course to be pursued for the conversion of the inhabitants. The cacique Don Juan was easily persuaded to accompany him to Santiago, with a number of his converted followers, and Father Luis Cancer was left behind alone. Don Pedro de Alvarado, the Governor, and the Bishop of Guatemala, received the cacique with great kindness and courtesy, the former taking off the plumed hat which he wore, and placing it on the head of the Indian chief; though his doing so gave great offence to the proud Spanish soldiers who surrounded him, and who murmured loudly at the act, saying that "it did not become the lieutenant of the Emperor-King of Castile, to take his hat from off his head, and place it on that of an Indian dog[1]."

The cacique was conducted over the city by the Governor and the Bishop, who showed him much that must

[1] "No dexó el Adelantado de llevar sus murmuraciones de los soldados y capitanes que lo vié-ron, porque les pareció mal, y assí lo dezian, Que un Lugarteniente del Emperador-Rey de Castilla se quitasse el sombrero de la cabeça y le pusiesse en la de un perro Indio."—Remesal, cap. xviii. p. 145.

have seemed quite wondrous to his eyes; but the natural gravity of the Indian caused him to refrain from expressing any astonishment; and he gazed upon all that was pointed out to him with as much indifference, says Remesal, "as if he had been born in Milan!" Many objects of value were offered to him, but he would accept of nothing save an image of the Virgin, which, when the Bishop had it taken down and presented to him, he reverently received on his knees. After a brief sojourn in Santiago the cacique and his companions returned to Tutzulutlan, highly satisfied with his visit; Las Casas and Rodrigo de Ladrada accompanied them to prosecute their mission, and, entering the province of Coban, continued to reap the fruits of their exertions, the inhabitants showing themselves very peaceable, and well disposed to receive the doctrines of the Christian faith.

To trace the footsteps of the worthy Fathers through regions which no longer retain their ancient denominations, would convey but little information to the modern reader, neither does the history of their mission offer any strikingly salient features. The principle laid down by Las Casas, that mildness and persuasion should be the only agents employed to ensure the conversion of the idolatrous Indians, was never departed from in the expeditions which he originated, and which, after his departure from Spain, was continued by Pedro de Angulo and the Dominican and Franciscan monks by whom he was subsequently joined. This principle was fully recognized by the Council of the Indies at the Court of Castile, and the amplest instructions were transmitted for the protection of the Indians, and the punishment of those who dared to violate the decrees in their favour, as is apparent by the royal letters addressed to Pedro de Angulo

from Barcelona on the 1st of May, 1543, and to the Licentiate Maldonado, from Valladolid, on the 7th of September, in the same year[1]. In both these documents the service of God, the protection, the liberty, and the good government of the Indians are strongly insisted on.

While these ordinances were observed, Christianity continued to make great progress in the country; and, by the command of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, the name of "Tierra de Guerra" was changed to that of "Vera Paz," because it had been conquered, not by the sword, but by the word of peace[2].

A few years later the capital of the province was built, and received the same name, at which time, at the desire of the Emperor, it was made by the Pope an episcopal city, and Pedro de Angulo was selected as the first bishop, it being judged that none could more easily guide the people than the man who had begun his career by becoming their apostle. The good bishop however did not live long enough to wear his mitre, for, laden with years and worn out with toil, he died before the Papal bull arrived at Vera Paz, on the 1st of April, 1562, having preached a sermon that same day to his well-beloved Indians at a place called Zalama.

[1] Remesal, lib. iv. cap. 12. p. 199.

[2] "A esta provincia le diéron los soldados Castellanos el nombre de *Tierra de Guerra*, porque no la pudiéron sugetar con la industria de las armas. Los religiosos Dominicos le diéron, en odio de la guerra, el nombre de *Vera Paz*, porque no vino á la obediencia Real con la fuerza de la espada, sino con la eficacia de la palabra Evangelica."—*The. Eccl.* p. 169, cited by Father Touron, vol. v. p. 294.

CHAPTER XI.

ECCLESIASTICAL GOVERNMENT OF YUCATAN.—THE ENCOMIENDAS.—PROHIBITION OF SLAVERY.—THE "REAL PROVISION."—AUDITOR SENT FROM SPAIN.—DEPARTURE OF MONTEJO FROM YUCATAN.—HIS DEATH.—NEW CODE OF LAWS FOR THE INDIANS.—LABOURS OF THE MISSIONARIES.—DIEGO DE LAUDA.—HIS COURAGEOUS CONDUCT IN SAVING A YOUNG INDIAN FROM SACRIFICE.—INTRODUCTION OF ROMISH MIRACLES.—"MIRACULOUS" CURES.—SEPARATION OF YUCATAN FROM MEXICO.—FATHER FRANCISCO TORAL ARRIVES AT MERIDA.—DIFFERENCES WITH LAUDA.—EXCULPATION OF THE LATTER.—HE SUCCEEDS TORAL IN THE BISHOPRICK.—HIS DEATH.—CIVIL GOVERNMENT OF THE PROVINCE.—SUCCESSION OF GOVERNORS.—PIRATICAL DESCENT ON THE COAST.—PROCLAMATION OF PHILIP THE THIRD.—APPEARANCE OF AN ENGLISH CORSAIR, WHO ATTACKS CAMPEACHY.—RENEWED ATTEMPTS OF THE PIRATES.

THE religious establishments of Yucatan having now been fixed on a broad and secure basis, the administration of the laws by which, in their spiritual as well as in their temporal relations, the Indians were henceforward to be governed, became the chief object of their rulers.

Although, according to the terms of the original grant from the Crown of Spain, supreme power was nominally vested in the Adelantado, the circumstances under which the country was finally pacificated deprived that officer of much of his real authority, and threw it into the hands of the religious communities.

The Council of the Indies, presided over by a church-

man, and numbering many ecclesiastical dignitaries amongst its members, kept a jealous eye upon the proceedings of all the governors of the Transatlantic provinces, and omitted no opportunity that afforded it the means of controlling their acts, and extending the influence of the Church. It was in many respects advisable that such control should exist, for the adventurous men who conquered those distant lands were too apt to exercise an authority that was purely military, to the neglect of many of the provisions by which they had consented to be bound.

It has been shown how Montejo departed from his instructions with respect to the ecclesiastics who should have accompanied him when he left Spain for Yucatan, and in what terms of severity the Council of the Indies censured him for his conduct: he afterwards gave that body additional cause for visiting him with reproof. It arose out of the question of the "Encomiendas,"—those military commanderies or settlements in the conquered provinces which were assigned to the "Conquistadors" as their private property, in reward for the services which they had rendered. To make these estates of value, it was necessary that more labour should be bestowed upon them than the Spaniards were able to give; but, as the protection of the natives was always a main point with the Council of the Indies, the owners of the "Encomiendas" were strictly prohibited from employing the Indians as slaves.

In spite however of this prohibition, slavery was the principle on which all these estates were worked in Yucatan, and the reports which the missionaries sent home satisfied the Council of the general disobedience to its orders which prevailed in this important particular.

Steps were therefore taken to enforce the royal commands; and, in the year 1549, a writ, or "Real Provision," was sent out from Spain on the subject of the "Encomiendas," renewing the former prohibitions, and ordering the Adelantado, and all others, to release the slaves on their estates forthwith, a certain compensation being provided, in order to cover past expenses. To see this order carried into execution, an Auditor accompanied the writ, whose power, for the time being, entirely superseded that of the Governor; indeed the capacity in which he appeared, as a corrector of abuses, actually clothed him with the chief authority. Father Lizana says that the name of this auditor was Herrera; but Cogolludo calls him "the Licentiate Santillan," stating that he is so designated in the "Real Provision" dated June 16, 1549. He arrived at Campeachy, and immediately proceeded to Merida, where he took up his residence, being received with much deference and respect by the Adelantado. The Auditor lost no time in ordering the restoration to liberty of all the slaves on Montejo's "Encomienda," and this part of his instructions was speedily performed; but the promised compensation was long before it arrived. Indeed neither Montejo himself nor his immediate descendants were benefited by it, for although a suit for its recovery was instituted, after the Adelantado's death, by his daughter Doña Catalina Montejo, the proverbial delay of the law—nowhere so slow-footed as in Spain—kept the question open for almost seventy years, the final decision in her favour not being given till the year 1618.

While the Auditor was engaged in the settlement of this matter of the "Encomiendas" throughout the province, the Adelantado took leave of Yucatan, with the

purpose of proceeding to Spain to render up an account of his government; but he did not live long enough to reach his native country, his death occurring, says Bernal Diaz, before he left New Spain[1].

After a stay of a few months in Yucatan the Auditor went to Mexico, his functions being performed by the ordinary alcaldes of the different towns, until the Royal Tribunal ("Real Audiencia") should send some one to govern the whole of the province, with the title of Alcalde Mayor[2]. It was nearly six years however before this new system of government was acted upon; and in the meantime the missionary Fathers gave their closest attention to the Indians. They felt that, to reclaim them

[1] Bernal Diaz thus describes Montejo: "The Chief Justice and Governor of Yucatan, Montejo, was of middling stature, had a pleasant-looking countenance, was a good horseman, and much addicted to all kinds of pleasures. He was about thirty-five years of age when he came to New Spain, but was rather a man of business than a soldier. He was generous of disposition, but lived beyond his income."

[2] Although the government of Yucatan was not continued in Montejo's family, the "Adelantazgo" remained with it: not however in the person of his son, Don Francisco de Montejo the younger, because of his illegitimacy, but in that of his daughter, Doña Catalina, who was born in lawful wedlock. Don Francisco was the son of the Adelantado and an unmarried lady named Ana de Leon; he was legitimatized by the Emperor Charles the Fifth, in a royal letter from Valladolid of the 6th of April, 1527, who at the same time conferred upon him the dignity of nobility. But this legitimation could not affect the rights of Doña Catalina, who married the Licentiate Alonso Maldonado, the first President of the Royal Tribunal of the "Confines;" and the title of Adelantado was transmitted to their son, Don Juan Maldonado Montejo. He eventually gave up the dignity, and all that pertained to it, to his nephew Don Alonso Suarez de Solis, the son of Don Christobal Suarez de Solis, and Doña Aldonça de Guzman, natives of Salamanca, in Old Spain, whose descendants enjoyed the title and pre-eminence of Adelantado of Yucatan. It was in favour of Don Alonso de Solis that judgment was given in the lawsuit of Doña Catalina.

Don Francisco Montejo the younger married Doña Maria del Castillo, and had by her three children, Juan, Beatriz, and Francisca. He seems to have inherited his father's profusion as well as his embarrassments, for he died in 1564 very poor, and much in debt. "Tan pobre," says Cogolludo, "por averle quitado los Indios encomiendados, que para aver de casa sus dos hijas, antes que muriesse, se empeñó de suerte q̃ quando falleció debia de veinte cinco á treinta mille pesos."

from the abuses and customs of their heathen state, it was necessary to enact laws more suitable to their existing condition, and under the superintendence of the Licentiate Tomás Lopez, who was sent from Guatemala for this purpose, a code was framed and issued in 1552.

At the time Cogolludo wrote his 'History of Yucatan,' these laws were preserved in the ancient Chapter-book of the city of Valladolid[1]. He cites them at some length, but it will be sufficient here to give an outline of the principal ordinances.

The caciques, and all in authority under them, were ordered to reside in their own towns, nor absent themselves for more than forty or fifty days at a time, under pain of losing their situations. The inhabitants generally were prohibited from moving from one town to another, without leave from the Spanish authorities. They were not allowed to attend meetings for the purpose of celebrating their old rites, nor hold any nocturnal assemblages whatsoever. In the construction of their houses, they were enjoined to build them of stone, and lay out their dwellings with regularity. The caciques were bound to keep a roll of the inferior people ("Maceguales[2]"), distinguishing the married from the single,—the baptized from those who were not so. The Indians were not to be removed from the towns under colour of their being slaves; and if any exchange of residence took place between them, it was not to be for a longer period than from thirty to forty days. It was decreed that churches should be built, but not more than one in each town, where the Christian doctrine only should be preached, and the same to be subject to the spiritual ordinances of the missionary Fathers; moreover no church

[1] In Yucatan. [2] Called also "Zamaguales."

was to be founded without a license from them. , The people were ordered to bring their children to be baptized, heathen names being strictly prohibited,—to adore all the holy images, venerate the Host, go morning and evening to church, repeat the Ave Maria and Paternoster, hear masses and sermons on fast-days, keep all the sacred festivals, and bear about them no signs of their former heathen customs, either in their ears, lips, or nostrils, or stain themselves of divers colours. In case of having numerous wives, they were to give information thereof to the priests,—more than one wife being forbidden; clandestine marriages were not allowed, nor were they suffered to marry within the prohibited degrees. The punishment for adultery was flogging, to the extent of a hundred lashes, and *clipping;* for bigamy, public flogging and marking on the forehead with a hot iron, "á manera de 4," and the loss of half the offender's goods, which were to be given to the first wife. It had been the custom of the Indians to let out their daughters, and sell their wives; this was forbidden, as well as the practice of keeping female slaves in a household. It was decreed that hospitals should be built in every town, the size varying according to the quality and number of the inhabitants. Encouragement was given to farming; and, as the principal tribute of the country consisted of cotton garments, the men were to be taught to spin, to assist their wives in this manufacture. The women were not to be permitted to go naked, but to wear long dresses, neither were they to go to the bathing-places at the same time as the men, nor to go into the men's houses except on festivals. "They were not to be allowed to play on the musical instruments of the country during the night, and if they played on them by

day, it was not to be during the celebration of mass or sermon; and they were to use no antique customs in their dances or songs, only such as the missionaries taught them[1]."

Drunkenness was severely punished, and the use of all intoxicating beverages, and the wines of Castile especially prohibited. To restrain them from the indulgence in their wandering habits, the men were not allowed to go to the mountains to hunt, but were ordered to burn their bows and arrows; in case however of the irruption of a tiger, or other fierce wild animal, each cacique was to keep in his house two or three dozen bows, and a proper supply of arrows. Making and repairing roads was one of the employments to which the Indians were to be constantly set. Salt-gathering and fishing on the coasts was to be common to all.

Such were the chief enactments of this code, and the missionary Fathers laboured as energetically in giving vitality to it, as in the endeavour to add new converts to the numbers whom they had already brought within the pale of comparative civilization.

It would occupy too much space, and prove, after all, but a repetition of such events as have already been described, were the separate labours of every mission in the north of Yucatan to receive the full illustration of them in this place, which they occupy in the elaborate history of Cogolludo. These missions amounted in all to three and twenty, and were continued at intervals till the year 1623. In every phase of their laborious and self-denying efforts, the missionaries were

[1] "Ni tocassen á tambor, Toponubuzles, ó tuncules de noche, y si por festejarse le tocassen de dia, no fuesse mientras Missa y Sermon; ni usassen de insignias antiguas para sus bayles, ni cantares, sino los que los Padres les enseñassen."—Cogolludo.

distinguished by their humanity, no less than by the evident sincerity of their motives. Father Landa was as conspicuous a defender of the Indians in Yucatan as Las Casas is known to have been wherever the colonial domination of Spain prevailed; and to ensure what he believed to be their spiritual welfare, he spared no toil, and left no danger unaffronted. When the inhabitants of the province of Valladolid had been for the most part brought to receive the Christian faith, Diego de Landa removed to that of Ytzamal, and thence to the eastern part of the peninsula, preaching wherever he went, and preventing the idolatrous rites of the Indians at the risk of his life. On one occasion[1], as Cogolludo records, he released a young Indian, barely eighteen years of age, from the stake to which he was already bound, and decked with flowers for sacrifice, overturning the idols and breaking the sacred drinking-vessels, although alone in the presence of more than three hundred of the natives, at whose hands he expected nothing but instant death. But his courage overcame them, and they suffered him to do what he pleased, listening with attention to his words, and the scene ended in their general conversion.

It is not to be supposed, however sincere the missionaries may have been to propagate "the true faith," that the alloy of superstition was withheld from the means employed to govern the minds of the Indian population. They were a race whose original religion, as we have seen,

[1] "Tenian un mancebo de hasta diez y ocho años de edad, muy cargado de flores, y biẽ amarrado á un palo para executar en él el sacrificio. Sin mostrar tremor, el Padre Landa, ni dezir cosa alguna á los Indios, se fué azia el palo, en que el miserable mancebo estaba atado, y le desató, poniendole junto á sí. Derribó los idolos de donde los tenian colocados, quebró las vasijas de aquella idolatrica bebida, y con espiritu de Dios les dixo, que le oyessen lo que queria enseñarles para el bien de sus almas." —Cogolludo, lib. v. cap. xii. p. 287.

was debased by superstitious and delusive practices, and we must not wonder if we find that the "pious frauds" which the Church of Rome enacted in Europe, found their way to the newly-erected altars of Yucatan. In proportion as the number of converts increased, and with them the foundation of fresh religious establishments, certain localities acquired a celebrity which raised them above the rest. And this was but a natural process in a country like Yucatan. The Indians, in the days of their idolatry, had been accustomed to go in pilgrimage to Cozumel to worship their blood-bestained idols, and yield implicit belief to the juggling of their priests. It cost them therefore little effort to fancy, as they were told, that particular shrines were endowed with peculiar efficacy.

True to his vocation as a chronicler of the Romish Church, Cogolludo enters at considerable length into the question of "miracles," recording in two chapters, especially devoted to them, the miraculous cures which were wrought by images of the Virgin at various places. The chief of these were at Ytzamal, where he says were wrought "innumerabiles milagros, de que se pudiera escrivir un gran volúmen;" and to give greater weight to his assertions, he draws the portrait of the imaged Virgin as it was carved by the most cunning artificer of Guatemala[1]. The other principal images were in the convent of Calotmul, and at Bakál, where they were reverently worshiped under the titles of "La purísima Concepcion" and "La Natividad." As these

[1] "Es esta Santa Imágen de escultura de talla entesa con su ropage estofado, de altura de cinco questas, y seis dedos, el rostro muy Magestuoso, y grave, el color de él blanco, algo pálido, las manos juntas sobre el pecho, y levantadas, y causa respecto venerabile mirarla. Tiene muy ricos vestidos y joyas, que devotos le han dado," etc.—Lib. vi. cap. iv. p. 317.

"miracles" however do not differ in any respect, save that of the local circumstances attending them, from the thousands which have been recorded elsewhere, it is scarcely worth while to disinter them from the pages of Cogolludo.

After the meeting of the first Custodial Chapter at Merida in 1549, the system of Church government in Yucatan proceeded in regular order. The peninsula had been originally made a spiritual dependency upon the province of Santo Evangelio in Mexico, but the rapid progress of conversion, and the increasing extent of the newly christianized districts, made it desirable that Yucatan should no longer depend upon Mexico, and in 1561 the separation took place. But it was in the first instance rather a transfer of authority than complete independence, for the arrangement provided that the Provincial Chapters should alternately be held in Guatemala and Yucatan. It was found however that so much inconvenience arose from the great distance between Santiago de Guatemala and Merida, that six years later, in 1567, the province was made wholly independent, and from that time forth was governed by its own spiritual authority.

In the interval Father Francisco Toral arrived to take possession of the bishopric. He was the third prelate in nomination, but the first who actually visited the country in that capacity. He was a native of Ubeda in Andalucia, and had previously been Provincial of Santo Evangelio in Mexico; but, in 1562, he was appointed to the see of St. Joseph of Yucatan. Untoward circumstances arose immediately upon his arrival in his diocese, reports having been made to him highly prejudicial to Father Landa; and although an interview took place between

the bishop and the provincial, the latter was unable to remove from his superior's mind the prejudices instilled into it by those who envied the reputation of the excellent missionary. So strongly impressed was the bishop that Father Landa had exercised his functions imperfectly, that he wrote to the King to that effect; and when the Provincial received intelligence of this fact he at once resigned his office, and proceeded to Spain to justify himself before his sovereign, Philip the Second. The King, on the receipt of the bishop's letter, placed it in the hands of the General of the Jesuits, asking his opinion of the proceedings of Father Landa. The reply, considered apparently with much deliberation, was highly favourable to the Provincial; and, in 1566, Philip despatched a royal letter from Madrid, informing the bishop of the satisfaction he had derived from the course which Father Landa and his colleagues had pursued[1]. The bishop received this intimation in all humility, and demonstrated the sincerity of his regret by a public acknowledgment of the error he had committed in depriving the province of the services of so able an assistant as the Provincial. The difference was thus healed; but Father Landa felt unwilling to return to Yucatan, though urged to do so by the King in person, preferring to remain in the Convent of San Antonio de Cabrera, at Toledo, of which he had recently been elected the Superior; and in this retirement he remained till the death of Francisco Toral, in 1572, when, yielding to the renewed solicitations of the King and the Council of the Indies, he agreed to accept the bishopric, and return to the scene of his former labours. His career was too brief for the accomplishment of all the good he meditated, for

[1] Cogolludo, lib. vi. cap. vii. p. 527.

he died in 1579, when only in the fifty-fourth year of his age and the seventh of his episcopate, having devoted thirty years of his ecclesiastical life to the conversion of the Indians. Gregorio de Montalvo and Juan Izquierdo were the bishops who, until 1602, severally filled the see of Yucatan; but beyond the ordinary incidents of Church government and the gradual advance of Christian civilization, the narratives of the chroniclers supply little that calls for especial record.

Of the same complexion was the civil administration; though it may be necessary briefly to glance at the order of succession of the respective Governors of the province, and the manner in which their appointments were made.

In the year 1555 the Royal Tribunal of Mexico sent Gaspar Xuarez de Avila to Yucatan with the title of Alcalde Mayor, and in this capacity he governed the country for two years. He was succeeded by the Licentiate Alvaro de Caravajal, sent thither by the Tribunal of Guatemala, Yucatan having been subjected to that province by a royal decree. He remained till 1558, and was followed by Alonso Ortis de Argeta, Juan de Paredes, and Jofré de Loaysia, the last of whom held the government till 1562, when the appointments proceeded direct from Spain.

The first Alcalde Mayor sent out by the King was Doctor Diego Quixada. His successor, in 1564, was Don Luis Cespedes de Oviedo, in whom greater authority was invested than in his predecessors, power being given to him to appoint a lieutenant-governor. His administration was not however a successful one, for he fell into disgrace on account of malversation, spending the public moneys ("ayudas de costa") partly on his relations and followers, and partly in the discharge of his personal

debts. A royal *Cedula* was consequently issued, prohibiting any private appropriation of the "ayudas de costa," and Oviedo was superseded by Don Diego de Santillan, whose appointment took place in 1569.

Santillan's government was marked by one feature of interest, which relieves the annals of this period from the monotony thrown around them by Cogolludo.

Soon after his arrival he received a letter from the King, informing him, on the authority of Don Francisco de Alaba, the Spanish Ambassador at Paris, that the French were fitting out an armada for the purpose of making a descent upon the coast of Yucatan. Santillan visited all the ports of the province, to provide against the threatened attack; but his arrangements were somewhat imperfect, for the northern coasts afforded a few piratical vessels the opportunity they sought, and, in the month of May, 1569, a small force landed, without resistance, at Zizal[1]. They advanced as far as a town called Hunucma, about four leagues inland on the road to Merida: they plundered the convent there, carried off the plate and other valuables, committed sacrilege by drinking wine from the sacred vessels and profaning the holy images, and crowned their exploit by making the cacique and several officials prisoners. Captain Juan Arevalo de Loyasia was sent against them with a company of soldiers, and forced the pirates to retire. They hovered however upon the coast till a reinforcement put out to sea, and then took the direction of Cozumel, which place, being without a garrison, they took possession of; but they were eventually dislodged by Gomez de Castrillo, one of the old Conquistadors, who made them all pri-

[1] Cogolludo calls them "unos Franceses hereges," all the enemies of Spain being heretics in his eyes!

soners, and they were sent to Mexico, where some of them, says Cogolludo, "were burnt for Lutherans."

Another calamity also befell Yucatan during the time of Diego de Santillan, in a great famine which happened in 1571, in consequence of the failure of the crops of maize; and, tired of the unproductiveness of his appointment, Santillan petitioned the King to allow him to resign the government of Yucatan, and grant him another more lucrative. His request was acceded to, and he was sent to Tucuman, being succeeded in the peninsula by Francisco Velasquez Guijon, who arrived in Merida in 1573, and remained till 1577.

The period of office appears to have been fixed henceforward at about four years, as the following governors appear in regular succession:—Guillen de Las Casas, from 1577 to 1582; Francisco de Solis, from 1582 to 1586; Antonio de Voz-Mediano (an exception to the rule), from 1586 to 1593; and Alonso Ordoñez de Navarez, till 1596. In the last-named year—whether from death or displacement, has not been ascertained—the government of Yucatan was temporarily vested in the person of Don Carlos de Samana y Quiñones by the viceroy of New Spain. Don Diego Fernandez succeeded to the permanent administration, and during the period of his government occurred the death of Philip the Second of Spain. The form in which his son and successor was proclaimed in this remote region may be worthy of a passing illustration.

The Royal Cedula, announcing the death of Philip the Second and the succession of Philip the Third, having been duly received, the proclamation was made with the same ceremonies that were observed in Old Spain. On the 18th of April, 1599, the inhabitants of Merida and

all the surrounding districts being assembled in the Plaza Mayor of that city, the King's letter, acknowledging the oaths and obligations under which he assumed the crown, was read in the presence of the Governor and all the authorities, and Francisco Martin Redondo, the Alferez Mayor, advancing to the point of the platform, raised the royal standard, and, in a clear voice, uttered these words three times:—"Yucatan, Yucatan, Yucatan, Cozumel and Tabasco, for the King, Don Philip, our lord, the third of that name, whom God preserve for many years!" and every one, uncovering, replied in a loud voice, "Amen, Amen, Amen![1]".

The successor to Don Carlos de Samano y Quiñones was Don Diego de Velasco, the son of the Conde de Niebla, who was sent out by the King in the year 1597. A memorable event is recorded of that year in the appearance, off the port of Campeachy, of a squadron of English pirates commanded by Captain William Park[2]. He remained to windward of the harbour with a large ship, a tender and a launch, until he found means to communicate on shore with a certain Juan Venturate, who agreed to facilitate his entrance into the town. Park disembarked his men, and surprised the place in the middle of night, killing and plundering the inhabitants in true piratical fashion. The confusion caused by this sudden attack was heightened by the absence of the

[1] "Llevantado en el tablado el estandarte real Francisco Martin Redondo, Alferez Mayor, y diziendo á vozes intelligibles tres vezes: Yucathán, Yucathán, Yucathán, Cozumel é Tabasco, por el Rey Don Phelipe nuestro Señor, Tercero de este nombre, que Dios guarde muchos años! Y quitandose todos las gorras, respondiéron en altas vozes: 'Amen, Amen, Amen!'"—Cogolludo, lib. viii. cap. i. p. 418.

[2] "Aquel mismo año de 1597 dió vista al puerto de Campeche una esquadra de navios Ingleses cosarios, por andar al pillage, cuyo cabo y capitan se llamaba Guillermo Parque."—Cogolludo, lib. viii. cap. i. p. 419.

Alcaldes, one of whom resided at a country-house at some distance, and the other at a convent outside Campeachy. Messengers were however despatched to them immediately, and a force was collected; but the Alcalde did not venture to march till daylight, when they found the town still given up to sack and pillage. They posted their men at the ends of the streets to cut off the retreat of the pirates, and a sanguinary fight took place, which lasted for two hours, at the end of which Captain Park fell mortally wounded, and his party succeeded by a desperate effort in carrying him off with them to the shore, where some of their number had been left to secure their embarkation. They were harassed by the Spaniards to the water's edge, and lost several men, besides leaving a great part of their booty behind them. The pirates took revenge for their discomfiture by informing the inhabitants of the treachery of their fellow-townsman Venturate, and he was put to death on the spot. As soon as the English had returned to their vessels, a ship was manned with troops which were sent from Merida, and put out to sea under the command of Alonso de Vargas Machuca. A sharp skirmish took place, and the English tender was captured, when the pirates, finding the resistance they met with so great, after hovering about for seventeen days, finally took their departure, and Don Alonso, carrying his prize to Campeachy, landed there, and returned to Merida, where he was received in triumph.

In the following year however another squadron of English pirates reappeared in still greater force, and made a descent upon the island of Cozumel, where, for a time, they established themselves, after detaching one of their vessels to the Rio de Lagartos, called by the

Indians Holcoben. But the Spaniards were now too well prepared, and after fruitless attempts to penetrate beyond the coast, the enemy again withdrew. In the year 1600 the same squadron, numbering four vessels, once more returned, but departed without achieving their object; in 1601 they made another attempt, with no greater success; but in the following year the pirates effected the capture of a Spanish vessel near Cape Catoche, and this seems to have been their last appearance for several years.

Freed from external alarm, the pacification of the country surrounding the Bay of Ascension became the next object of the Government, with the further design of extending the Christian religion to the central region of the peninsula, which was peopled by the warlike Itzaex. This arduous attempt constitutes a remarkable feature in the history of Yucatan, and requires to be narrated at some length.

CHAPTER XII.

THE VARIOUS TRIBES OF INDIANS IN THE PENINSULA OF YUCATAN.—VILLAQUIRAN'S REPORT.—CLIMATE AND GENERAL ASPECT OF YUCATAN.—GEOGRAPHY OF THE PENINSULA.—ATTEMPTED PACIFICATION OF THE LACANDONES.—UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORT OF FATHER CASILLA.—APOSTASY OF THE INDIANS.—FATE OF FATHER DOMINGO DE VICO.—WARLIKE MEASURES RESOLVED ON.—EXPEDITION OF QUIÑONES.—HIS INDIAN AUXILIARIES.—RENDEZVOUS AT COMITLAN.—MARCH TO THE LAKE OF LACANDON.—SIEGE OF THE CITY.—THE FAVOURABLE OMEN.—NEGOTIATIONS.—VESSELS LAUNCHED ON THE LAKE.—CAPTURE AND BURNING OF THE CITY.—TOTILTEPEQUE TAKEN.—PUCHUTLA CAPTURED.—RETURN OF QUIÑONES.—RESULTS OF THE EXPEDITION.

At the period of the conquests of Guatemala and Yucatan, there remained between those provinces a considerable tract of country peopled by savage Indians, known by the appellation of Itzaex, Petenes, Lacandones, Acalans, Manches, Choles, Quiches, Puchutlas, Tirumpics, and others. The details which we have already given of the march of Cortes, and the religious missions of Las Casas into the Tierra de Guerra, will have afforded some indications of the condition and character of these barbarous tribes; but it is to the ample accounts which have been given by the Spanish historian Villagutierre[1],

[1] Here is the title of Villagutierre's work in all its lawyer-like and Castilian prolixity: "Historia de la Conquista de la Provincia de el Itza, reduccion, y progressos de la de él de Lacandon, y otras Na-

that we must look for the most precise information concerning a people who, for nearly two centuries, were the cause of so much anxiety and disquiet to the Crown of Spain and the subjects of that monarchy.

At a period considerably later than that of which we must in the first instance treat, in describing the attempts that were made to pacificate the districts which, for convenience, we call "the country of the Itzaex," a report of the physical aspect of the central region of Yucatan was drawn up for the information of the Council of the Indies, which may not be inappropriately introduced in this place. It is set forth in a minute presented to the Council, in 1639, by the Licentiate Antonio de Leon Pinello, on whom had devolved the duty of condensing the information contained in the various documents on the subject which had been laid before that body by Don Diego de Vera Ordoñez de Villaquiran. He says:—"The lands which it is proposed to pacify and to people lie to the north of the district of Guatemala. Its immediate boundaries are the great lake of Xicalango or Terminos, which lies between Yucatan and Tabasco; on the east, the western part of Yucatan and the interior part of the Gulf of Honduras as far as the Gulf of Dolce; on the south, the city and district of the province of Guatemala; and on the west, Vera Paz and the territory of Chiapa, which joins Tabasco. Within these limits is comprehended a portion of the territory

ciones de Indios barbaros, de la Mediacion de el reyno de Guatimala, á las provincias de Yucatan, en la America septentrional. Primera parte. Escrivela Don Juan de Villagutierre Soto-Mayor, Abogado, y Relator, que ha sido de la real chancilleria de Valladolid: y aora Relator en la real, y supremo consejo de las Indias. Y la dedica á el mismo real, y supremo Consejo. En Madrid: en la imprenta de Lucas Antonio de Bedmar, y Narvaez, Portero de camera de su Magestad, Impressor de los Reynos de Castilla, y Leon, en la calle de los Preciados. Año M.D.CC.I."

which extends from 15° to 17½° of latitude, that is to say, more than forty leagues; and, upon the parallels, it has four degrees, or seventy leagues; in some parts more, in some less. These are the most probable dimensions, although some who have given information on the subject have made the distances greater."

This description, though not very precise, is sufficiently clear to establish the fact that the entire territory now denominated Belize, or British Honduras, must have fallen within the limits thus imperfectly sketched. The Indians who inhabited this tract of country, and whose civilization it was considered important to effect, are thus described in the same Report.

"The people whose pacification was proposed are known by the names of Manche and Lacandone, which are the two principal provinces, and include the lands occupied by the Acalans, Taizacs or Atizacs, Quiches, Tirumpics, Puchutlas, and other tribes of less repute, which are either subject or belonging to them. The province of Manche is nearest to Vera Paz and Golfo Dolce. Acalan and Taiza, or Atitza, lie towards Yucatan, the Quiches and Tirumpics nearer Tabasco. The Lacandones and Puchutlas occupy the interior as far as Chiapa. These facts are inferred from such information as we have been able to gather, the map before us[1] being imperfect, and failing to supply the information necessary to set forth accurately the true situation and description of these lands. The chief and the most barbarous and ferocious amongst these nations, and whose pacification ought to be first attempted, on account of the mischief which they have caused, and are now causing, is that of the Lacandones."

[1] We have been unable to procure a copy of this map.

Of the climate and general aspect of the country, we have the following account.

"The climate of these provinces is warm, and somewhat humid, in consequence of the rains which are prevalent for nine months in the year, but neither the heat nor the rain are sufficient to render the climate sickly, or inconvenient to inhabit: on the contrary, it is regarded as a healthy climate. It is in some parts mountainous, has plains and valleys, some clear and others covered with bush, almost impenetrable; it has also some ridges of little height and of easy ascent. From the continual fall of water from the mountains, four large rivers are formed; which divide the country, three of them emptying themselves into the lakes of Xicalango, and through them into the Mexican Gulf, and the fourth into the Bay of Honduras. The one is called Tuhalha, which, rising in the province of Guatemala, passes through Vera Paz. The other is called Canguen, and comes down from the province of Manche. The third is called Zebolai, takes its rise in the ridges of Vera Paz, and passes through the town of Coban, whence its exploration was attempted in 1625. The fourth is Petena, which rises in the interior of these lands, and is six days' journey from Coban by way of the Manche country: it has a port, by which it is said you may reach San Tomás of Castillo in two days[1]."

Thus much premised of the central regions of the peninsula, we revert to the period when, through the exertions of the Dominican Fathers, the peaceful reduction of the province of Tutzulutlan was effected.

[1] There can be no doubt that this last-mentioned river, the Petena, is that which is now called Belize, or Old River, at the mouth of which the principal, and indeed the only commercial town in the British settlement of Honduras, now stands.

The accomplishment of these objects, and the conversion of the natives to the Christian faith, were viewed with great suspicion and dislike by the Lacandone Indians, the fiercest and most warlike of the central tribes, nor were they long before they openly manifested their hostile intentions. In one of the Cedulas issued by the Crown of Spain, it is stated that, in the year 1552, the Lacandones and Puchutlas, having combined, made a night attack upon two Christian towns fifteen leagues from Chiapa, on which occasion they killed many of the inhabitants, and made numerous prisoners, "sacrificing children at the altars of the churches and at the foot of the crosses, tearing out their hearts, and besmearing with blood the revered images which they had erected in God's holy temples: further, that they destroyed and burnt their towns, vociferating, 'Christians, call on your God to defend you,' with many other opprobrious and insulting epithets, and that the principal aggressors in these proceedings were Indians who, after having received the Sacrament, had become apostates from the faith."

In consequence of these depredations, a Royal Cedula was despatched, on the 20th of January, 1553, to the Audience of Guatemala, commanding that it should endeavour to pacify them by obtaining a footing amongst them, and establishing schools for their conversion. It was at the same time recommended that the Dominican Friars should be charged with this duty, in consequence of the success which had already attended their efforts in Vera Paz. The exertions however of these venerable men having been unsuccessful, the Lacandones continuing to persecute and to injure all those who embraced Christianity, a second Royal Cedula was issued on the

22nd of January, 1556, directed to the Audience of Guatemala, which, after recounting the injuries committed by the Lacandones, already detailed, urged the adoption of vigorous measures. To remedy this state of affairs, it appears that Friar Thomas Casilla, Bishop of Chiapa, proceeded fifty leagues into their country with an escort of soldiers, but his mission was not attended with success; on the contrary, some Indian messengers whom he sent to the Lacandones were murdered, with two Spaniards who accompanied them. On the return of the Bishop to Guatemala, these occurrences were duly reported to the Audience, and application was made to it to adopt measures to defend their Christian subjects; but, Philip II. having issued positive instructions that war should not be waged against the Indians of Puchutla or Lacandone, it was determined not to send a military force into the country. The result of this determination was that four other towns which had been formed, and had adopted the Christian faith, revolted and became apostates, seeing that the outrages which had been committed by the Lacandones and Puchutlas in Vera Paz and Chiapa had remained unpunished.

A short time previously to the issuing of the last-mentioned Cedula, the province of Acalan had begun to receive the Christian faith, and the Indians of one of its towns had been baptized, their first apostle being Father Domingo de Vico. The towns however which continued in their idolatry determined to destroy those whose inhabitants had been baptized, together with their holy preacher, and, to carry their design into execution, they invoked the aid of the Lacandones. Father Domingo de Vico, together with his companion, Father Andrez Lopez, and thirty Indians of Vera Paz who had accom-

panied him, were all slain with arrows at Acalan by the Acalans and Lacandones in the year 1555[1].

This melancholy event appears to have been occasioned in a great measure by the blind confidence which Father Vico reposed, not in his cause only, but in the peaceable dispositions of the Indians.

The sufferings which these provinces had undergone during the last few years, induced the Dominican Friars, in a Chapter which they held at Coban, in the year 1558, to take into consideration how far it would be just and lawful to make war on the Lacandones and Puchutlas, not because they were infidels and cannibals, but because they had destroyed many churches and sacrificed Christian children to their idols; and they resolved that it was the bounden duty of His Majesty to protect his Christian subjects, and to exterminate, in consequence of the cruelties they had committed, the Lacandone and Puchutla Indians. At the same time the Council of the Indies, continuing to receive such disastrous accounts of the occurrences which had taken place in these provinces, despatched a new Cedula, dated the 16th March, 1558, commanding that, as the Lacandones were in the habit of issuing from their fortresses, and invading the peaceable inhabitants of Vera Paz and Chiapa, they should be driven out from their present lands and relegated to a desert spot situated beyond Chiapa; and for the better accomplishment of this, recommended that the inhabitants of Chiapa and Guatemala should be urged to assist the enterprise, and that they should be rewarded by receiving a tribute from the Lacandones who were thus removed; and that, if by this means they could not succeed in reducing them to submission,

[1] Villagutierre, book i. cap. 9, 10.

a general war should be declared against them, and that all prisoners who might be captured should be treated as slaves.

In consequence of these instructions, it was determined (it being impossible to compel these Indians to inhabit Chiapa, as had been suggested) to make war against the refractory tribes of Lacandones, Puchutlas, and Acalans; and the Audience of Guatemala appointed to the command of the troops to be sent against them the Oidor of the Province, Pedro Ramirez de Quiñones, who had already given proofs of his efficiency in the field, having served under Pedro de la Gasco in Peru, and being one of the five captains who warred against Gonzales Pizarro.

The number of volunteers who flocked to his standard was very great, and consisted of many of the most important personages of the province of Guatemala, who offered their services at their own expense, "as much," says Villagutierre, "out of zeal for the cause of Christianity, as in the hope of obtaining the reward His Majesty offered." If we reverse the order of this sentence, we shall probably give a more accurate idea of the motives of these pious Spaniards, who, whatever their Christian zeal, were never behindhand in making a display of it where temporal advantage was conjoined. It is evident moreover, from the preparations which were made, that other considerations than the mere pacification of a horde of barbarous Indians influenced the Spanish adventurers.

The actual force assembled under Quiñones is not stated, but there can be no doubt of its being a very large one, for the contingents of Indian auxiliaries, furnished by the towns of Chiapa and Zimacantlán and

the city of Santiago de Guatemala, numbered nearly two thousand men. Large quantities of provisions,—maize, meat, and vegetables,—were purchased, and a great number of natives were employed to carry them for the use of the army. Every soldier was also provided, in addition to his arms, with a large hollow gourd to carry water through the uninhabited and mountainous districts, as well as to assist him in swimming across the rivers and lakes, if necessary.

The Indian troops from Chiapa were very gaily appointed: they carried very bright and showy flags, the drummers and trumpeters wore feathers in their headpieces, and their equipment of arms consisted of swords and bucklers and spears, as well as bows and arrows. They carried themselves so well, were so dexterous in the use of their arms, and showed so much quickness in all their manœuvres, that, to look at them, they seemed equal to any of the Spanish disciplined troops. The Guatemalan contingent was neither so cleanly nor smart as that from Chiapa, but the men who composed it were not deficient in strength or courage, and altogether they presented a very martial appearance. As for the Spanish soldiers, their array was very brilliant, for they spent all the money they had in ornaments, weapons, and military accoutrements.

The place of rendezvous for the various bodies was Comitlán, and there Quiñones reviewed them all; Casillas, the Bishop of Chiapa, blessed their arms, and, having been regaled at the good prelate's expense, the army took the road to the mountains, preceded by a great many Indians, who acted as pioneers, for the ground was both difficult and intricate. The march lasted fifteen days, at the end of which time the troops reached

the shore of the lake of Lacandon, in the centre of which rose a lofty rock, surrounded by several smaller ones, on which the town was built. It was a very strong position, and could easily be defended from assault, for the rocks were so bare that there was not earth enough on them to admit of the natives burying their dead, and they threw them into the lake. "From feeding on these bodies," Villagutierre relates, "the fish in the lake became very large, especially the turtle; and, during the whole of the siege the Spaniards would not touch them, so disgusted were they with the nature of the food which produced such plump and savoury creatures[1]." The Indian auxiliaries however had no scruples of this sort, and, being neither dainty nor particular, feasted plentifully on them, laughing at the overstrained delicacy of the Spanish soldiers.

The appearance of the town was imposing, the houses, which were white, being large and well built; and the Lacandones, trusting in the strength of their position and fortified walls, took little notice of the army; for, although it was very numerous, they said that, from former experience, they were not afraid of what the Spaniards could do against them,—alluding to the ill-success that had attended the previous efforts made to reduce them. Another reason why they considered themselves safe, and felt secure of victory, was the great faith they placed in what they imagined a good omen. While the Spaniards were marching towards the lake, and the cavalry had nearly reached it, a little Negro boy, belonging to Juan de Guzman, the camp-master, saw some green heads of maize in an enclosure surrounded by deep ditches. He climbed into it to gather some, but

[1] Villagutierre, lib. i. cap. 2.

had hardly touched the maize, when he was seized by a party of Lacandones who were lying in ambush. The horsemen with whom the boy had been marching, attempted to rescue him, but their animals were unable to leap the ditches, or clear the fences; and the Lacandones, gathering round the child, threw him on the ground, opened his breast with a sharp knife, and took out his heart, which they offered as a sacrifice to the sun. They then fled with all speed to their canoes, and paddled across the lake to the town, to tell the inhabitants it was impossible they should be conquered, because of the sacrifice they had made, so pleasing to their God.

Hostilities nevertheless were not immediate, for as soon as the Spanish troops had pitched their camp on the borders of the lake, several Indians left the rock in small canoes, and came without the least fear, to inquire what the strangers wanted. The reply made was that they came to see them and speak to them of peace. On receiving this answer, the Lacandones withdrew; but, returning shortly afterwards, they said that they too were desirous of peace, and would gladly be good friends with the Spaniards and receive their religion. These embassies however were looked upon as feigned; the reason being that, after the messengers had been well received and treated with attention, they were asked to bring their canoes to carry the Spaniards to the town, and having consented to do so, they only brought eleven small ones, saying that they had no more, though it was well known that a great many were concealed. The Spaniards therefore conjectured that it was the intention of the Lacandones to convey the army across in parties so small that they might easily put them to death as they arrived on the rock.

But the delay which these embassies occasioned, was turned to good account by Quiñones, for he took advantage of it to put together the framework of one or two large vessels which the army had brought with them from Comitlán. The timbers were put together, caulked, and then launched amidst general acclamation. The astonishment of the Lacandones, when they beheld this large monster, filled with armed men, floating towards their town, was excessive. They immediately took to flight; but a hundred and fifty of their number were made prisoners, and amongst them were the principal cacique and the high priest, both of whom had been concerned in the murder of Father Vico and his companion in Acalan. This capture was effected by the Indians of Chiapa, who were far more skilful and courageous swimmers than the Lacandones, none of whom, save those in canoes, being able to escape.

The troops now entered the abandoned town, and, after having examined the houses and places of worship, it was discovered that the Lacandones, unlike the other tribes whom the Spaniards had met with, had not a single idol, but only adored the sun, and that they simply made their offerings and sacrifices before it in its actual presence, and under no other form. The only things found which might have belonged to Father Vico and his companion were a scapulary and small cape: it was subsequently known that these had been worn by the priest who presided at the festivals of the Lacandones, when they held their drunken revels; there were also found two small images. The town was then given up to pillage, and afterwards set on fire amidst great rejoicing, the rest of the army on the shore, who could see what was going on, joining heartily in the cry. Qui-

ñones also despatched a force of thirty Spanish soldiers and a great number of Indian auxiliaries in pursuit of of the fugitive Lacandones, who had descended a large river in their canoes, but the pursuers, having no means of following them further, returned to the main body.

The camp of the Spaniards was now raised, and the whole of the troops having crossed the lake, the brig was scuttled and sunk, and the army advanced upon the town of Totiltepeque, which also belonged to the Lacandones. Their march was a very disorderly one, all the ordinary precautions being neglected, as they never imagined the enemy would dare to attack victims who were so numerous and well appointed. This confidence nearly caused their ruin, for in a narrow defile the army was waylaid by a body of about a hundred Lacandones, who, appearing on the heights, attacked the Spaniards so suddenly, showering down such heavy flights of arrows, that the troops were thrown into great confusion: several were very badly wounded, and amongst these Juan de Guzman, the master of the camp. They rallied however after the first shock, and as soon as the Indians had exhausted their quivers, the Spaniards scaled the heights, but the foe had taken flight.

No further interruption was offered after this ambuscade, and Totiltepeque was gained in safety; the place was abandoned, but was found to be well provided with stores and provisions. This was a great relief to the army, whose means of subsistence were beginning to fall short. From Totiltepeque the Spaniards proceeded to Puchatla, which, like the first town they came to, was situated in a small lake, and the inhabitants waited for them while they were making rafts to cross over. When these were ready the Spaniards embarked, the Chiapa

Indians swimming and guiding them for upwards of three hundred yards, carrying bundles of canes upon which they rested on the water. They were so expert as to swim with one hand guiding the raft, and in the other bearing their bows and arrows, which from time to time they discharged against the enemy, diving to avoid the discharge which the latter directed against them in return. Others of the Chiapanos swam on the gourds, also shooting while swimming, and covering a distance of more than a league; while another body protected the Spaniards on the rafts from the darts of the Lacandones in their canoes, thus giving them the opportunity to load their muskets as they advanced. The Puchutlans who were in the town, finding that their people in the lake were being hemmed in, and that the Spaniards drew nearer, took to their canoes, and rushing to the fight, a regular naval engagement took place, in which both sides fought with the most determined bravery; but the action did not last long, the effect of the fire-arms being too great for the barbarians to withstand: a panic seized them, and they fled in every direction, leaving several of their numbers killed, and many prisoners. The Spanish troops then entered Puchutla without further opposition, and, as usual, they found the town deserted.

Having accomplished so much, it was expected by the followers of Quiñones that he would not have paused here; but, for reasons which he did not choose to assign, the expedition was prosecuted no further, and, greatly to the discontent of those who had put themselves to such serious charges in the outset, orders were given for the army to return to Guatemala. But beyond the fact that they had driven the enemy before them wherever they

appeared; the expedition was wholly fruitless. The Spaniards carried back with them upwards of one hundred and ninety Lacandones prisoners, including amongst them the cacique and the high-priest; but, shortly after they arrived at Guatemala, the whole of them effected their escape.

An amusing incident is related by Villagutierre, which took place on the return of the army:—

"The spoils of the war amounted to nothing; but as it was considered by the Indians highly dishonourable to return from battle without trophies, one of them, who had not been lucky enough to pick up anything, hit upon a notable expedient: ashamed to enter the town empty-handed, he filled a basket with stones, covered it with his cloak and bore it on his shoulders, like the booty carried by his companions who had been more fortunate than himself. He went home in the same manner, and his wife received him with rapture, believing that he had brought a great treasure. Eager to examine it she tore away the cloak, but saw nothing save stones. These however she made the instruments of her vengeance, and so pelted her unhappy husband with them, that he was obliged to seek refuge in an ignominious flight."

Villagutierre thus sums up the result of this expedition against the Lacandones:—"Many of the Knights and Esquires who had taken part in the war, were rewarded with crosses and honours, but the greater part of them had spent so much money in finery and ornaments, bright arms and accoutrements, that they contracted considerable debts, and left their houses and estates involved for several years, and perhaps they are even yet not free."

CHAPTER XIII.

FEIGNED SUBMISSION OF THE ITZAEX.—THE FIRST MISSIONARY EXPEDITION TO ITZA.—VOYAGE UP THE RIVER OF TIPU.—ITS SINGULAR QUALITIES.—ARRIVAL OF THE MISSIONARIES AT TIPU.—RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOUR OF THE INDIANS.—EMBASSY TO TAYASAL.—RETURN OF ITZALAN WARRIORS.—THE MISSIONARIES SET OUT FOR TAYASAL.—PROTRACTED JOURNEY.—ARRIVAL AT TAYASAL.—THE FIRST MASS PERFORMED.—FUENSALIDA'S EXHORTATION.—THE IDOL TZIMINHAC.—FATHER ORBITA'S INDISCREET ZEAL.—ATTEMPT TO CONVERT THE CANEK.—NARROW ESCAPE OF THE MISSIONARIES.—THEY RETURN TO TIPU.

ALTHOUGH the people called the Itzaex had never been subdued by force of arms, a paramount authority over them had always been claimed by the Crown of Spain in virtue of the right supposed to be derived from the formal act of taking possession of the country generally. This authority however was merely nominal, nor had any attempt been made to reduce the inhabitants of the central region of Yucatan to submission since the failure of the expedition against the Lacandones and Puchutlas in 1559. The principle of military conquest had indeed been abandoned by the Council of the Indies, as far as related to the subjugation of the small independent tribes in the interior, and the extension of authority by religious means had become the substitute. Had it rested with the Governors of Yucatan, war would have

been carried as far the arms of the Spaniards could have reached, but hostilities were strictly forbidden.

The Itzaex, or Itzalanos, had the reputation of being very bad neighbours, and, to a certain extent, appear to have deserved it, for they were not only powerful but aggressive, and besides the continual warfare which they waged with surrounding tribes, made frequent incursions on the border provinces, occupied by the converted Indians and their Spanish protectors. They trusted for impunity to the difficulty of approach to their country, and to the security of their stronghold, the city of Tayasal, which was situated on the Peten, or island, of their great lake. It was also asserted of them that they were eminently deceitful, in proof of which we are told that, in the year 1614, a feigned submission was made by a party of Itzalanos who were sent to the city of Merida, with a message from their King, or Canek. They declared that their lord was anxious to yield obedience to the King of Spain, expressed a strong desire for peace, and earnestly solicited the friendship of the Spaniards. The Governor was satisfied with these assurances, accepted the obedience which they offered, and appointed them Alcaldes of their city, at the same time bestowing upon them the wands of office, together with numerous presents, with which, well satisfied, they returned to Tayasal. Figueroa expected that this friendly reception would have induced the Itzalanos to become Christians; but no such change having been operated, he considered that he had been deceived, and made an application to the Royal Council of the Indies for permission to make war upon them, but this request was refused, and the state of affairs remained unchanged.

About four years afterwards, however, when Figueroa

had been succeeded in the Government by Francisco Ramirez Brizeño, a provincial Chapter of the Order of St. Francis was held, on the 25th of March, 1618, in the city of Merida, at which Father Bartolomeo de Fuensalida and Father Juan de Orbita, impressed with the spiritual necessities of their heathen neighbours, made an offer to go amongst the Itzaex and preach the Gospel to them. Both these priests were men of learning and consummate virtue, and well versed in the Máya tongue, which was the language of the Itzalanos as well as of the inhabitants of Yucatan. This proposal being accepted by the Chapter, it was determined that they should at once proceed on their mission. The Provincial gave them the requisite letters of leave, which they presented to the bishop, Gonzalo de Salazar, who approved so highly of their resolution that he would fain have joined them; but as his position made this out of the question, he gave them a most ample commission, in which he granted them the fullest authority over the Spaniards and all classes of persons in the town of Salamanca de Bacalar, which comprised the district of Tipu, from whence the missionaries were to set out for the country of the Itzaex. He gave directions also for their being supported, until the time of their departure arrived, out of the baptismal, marriage, and funeral dues that were paid by the Indians to their priest at Tipu; for the Governor, Brizeño, alleging that he had no orders from the King, and being fearful of incurring blame in the event of any accident befalling the missionaries, refused to advance them funds to enable them to prosecute their journey. Besides these orders for their assistance, the Bishop gave them a number of rosaries, crucifixes, knives, scissors, and toys, with which to propitiate the Itzaex,

and the clergy and people of Merida liberally followed their prelate's example. The Fathers of the Order of St. Francis supplied them also with chalices, chasubles, and missals, for the ornament and use of their church, all of which objects were to be carried by the Indians who were to accompany the mission. The Governor alone withheld his aid, refusing even the letter of assistance which the missionaries had been promised on the day of their departure for Salamanca; on their application for it, he told them that they would receive it at their convent at Tecax, a place at some distance at the foot of the mountains, but in this respect also he failed to keep his word.

Accompanied by the prayers and earnest wishes of all the inhabitants of Merida, Fuensalida and Orbita set out barefooted on their perilous journey. They soon reached Tecax, and, after waiting in vain for the Governor's letter for several days, proceeded to Calotmal, across the mountains to the town of Chumhuhul, a distance of fifteen leagues of uninhabited country, intersected with deep marshes, and very difficult to cross. Thence they passed on to Pacha, through fifteen leagues more of inhabited country, over even a worse road than the former; to Xoca next, and finally arrived at Salamanca de Bacalar. The Alcalde of this place, one Andrés Carillo de Pernia, a native of Valladolid de Yucatan, received the missionaries and their attendants with great kindness, and finding that they were very desirous of reaching Tipu before the periodical rains set in, caused a large piragua to be constructed, manned, and victualled at his own expense, and, to ensure them favourable reception at Tipu, resolved to accompany them so far on their journey. Tipu was connected with the port of Salamanca de Bacalar

by the river Nohukun (or "Great River"); and the soft beauty of the scenery on its banks, the thick woods with which they were fringed, and the number of islands that studded the stream, afforded a charming contrast to the rugged and desolate country through which the missionaries had recently passed. They were amused too by the dexterity of the Indian boatmen, who struck and caught fish with harpoons without delaying the progress of the piragua, and the only inconvenience they suffered was from the multitudes of mosquitoes. "The voyage," says Villagutierre, "lasted three days, for the stream is very rapid, and so strong that for a distance of twelve leagues it is necessary, instead of oars, to use iron-shod poles, and at the slightest neglect the current carries the canoe back again. This river of Tipu," he continues, "has various rare qualities: it is as large a stream as any in Spain; its waters good and clear, more so than that of the Tagus. In the twelve leagues of the ascent which I have spoken of, it is divided into a hundred and ninety impetuously rapid branches, and, strange to say, the Indians have given an individual name to each, and know and call them by their names. A quantity of medicinal shrubs grow on the banks of the river; it contains a great deal of gold, and, either from this or from some hidden virtue, the drinking of its water cures the dropsy and excites an appetite, both in the sick and those who are well; even when drunk soon after eating heartily, in a short time it causes hunger again. At noon, when the sun is at the hottest, the water is cold; and at night it gets warm, so that a vapour rises from it, like a cauldron put on the fire[1]."

The intelligence of the approach of the missionaries had

[1] Villagutierre, book ii. cap. i.

preceded them, and about two leagues from the town they met the alcaldes, caciques, and leading persons of Tipu, coming down the river to receive them, with offerings of food and a drink called Zaca, made of cacao and maize. The Fathers saluted the deputation with great joy and gladness, and proceeded under their escort to the landing-place, where, all being prepared, the Indian inhabitants welcomed the missionaries with the dances of the country, and then, amidst great rejoicings, conducted Fuensalida and his companion to the church, where they returned thanks to God for their safe arrival at Tipu, "the outport of Christianity and fortress of its valiant spirits." The arrival of the missionaries took place on the eve of Whitsunday, and Father Orbita, who was particular in all matters pertaining to divine worship, immediately caused the church to be cleaned and decorated with the ornaments which he had brought from Merida, and on the following day the services were performed with great solemnity, to the great satisfaction of the Indians, whose opportunity for witnessing them was rare, their priest only coming amongst them at distant intervals from Bacalar. The festivity of Corpus Christi was kept with still greater ceremony; and the missionaries being fairly installed, and well taken care of by the people of Tipu, the Alcalde Carillo took his leave and returned to his own town.

The Fathers were now left alone with the Indians of Tipu, "but," says the chronicler of this mission, "they had God and his fervent spirit with them," and they were rejoiced to find that the Indians were attentive to their religious duties, attending the Church services with great punctuality, and sending their children to hear mass and sermon. The population of Tipu amounted to upwards of five hundred, all of whom were natives.

Their cacique was named Cristoval Ná, and amongst the leading people was Francisco Cumux, a descendant of the lord of the island of Cozumel, who received Hernando Cortes when on his way to the conquest of New Spain. "In his manners and actions," observes Villagutierre, "Cumux well showed his nobility and good blood, Indian though they were; he was very attentive to the Fathers, and a great singer; he went much to church, and sang in the services, *as if he were a private Indian.*"

As the missionaries were very anxious to make a beginning of their expedition to Itza, which was the object of their going to Tipu, they held a consultation with the principal people of the town, and it was agreed that it would be the best plan to send some trusty Indians to announce their approach. There was no one so fit to head this embassy as Cumux; and to give greater weight to it, it was resolved that he should be accompanied by several Indians of note. He made no difficulty of accepting the office, and cheerfully set out on an errand that was not without danger; his instructions being to inform the Canek what peaceable purposes the Fathers had in view, and to request him to send some of his chiefs to see them at Tipu, to ascertain their character and objects, before they presented themselves before him.

The journey from Tipu to Tayasal, the island-capital of Itza, which occupied six days, was successfully performed, and the message brought by Cumux favourably received. A council was held by the Canek to consider the request of the missionaries, and, there being some of those Itzalanos present at it who had visited Merida, and could testify to the peaceful intentions of the Fathers, it was not only agreed to, but two caciques with a proper suite were

ordered to accompany Cumux on his return to Tipu, and inform the missionaries of the consent given by the Canek. The appearance which these Itzalanos made is thus described by Villagutierre.

"The two captains carried their halberds with heads exactly like ours, excepting that, instead of steel, they were made of flint, and just below the head was a large bunch of feathers, of various beautiful colours, like the ribands our ensigns have at the head of their colour-staves; the head was about nine inches long, double-edged, and its point like that of a very sharp dagger. The other Itzaex Indians were armed with their bows and arrows, which they always carry when they go beyond their island and its territory, in case of their meeting with Chinamita Indians, a nation with whom they have been continually at war. These Itzaex piqued themselves on being very bold warriors."

As soon as the party arrived at Tipu they were presented by Cumux to the missionaries, whom they saluted according to the custom of the country, by placing the right hand on the left shoulder in token of peace and friendship, to which greeting the Fathers replied in the most affectionate and courteous manner, returning many thanks for the permission granted to them to go to Tayasal. The Itzaex remained at Tipu for four or five days, greatly admiring the novelty of the Christian worship and being particularly taken by the singing; they then took leave, and the missionaries prepared for their journey.

All things being ready, on the 15th of August, 1618, Fathers Fuensalida and Orbita, accompanied by their chapel-master, singers, and sacristans, and escorted by the cacique Cristoval Ná, and a body of twenty armed

Indians, left Tipu, but had not proceeded far before they met with a serious obstruction in a broad lake called Yaxhaá, which, stretching away to the right and left, completely intercepted their route. The Indians could not be persuaded to make the circuit of the lake, in order to recover the road, alleging that the loss of time which it would occasion would prevent them from getting in their harvest, and it was finally resolved that they should return to Tipu to have a canoe built. Workmen were consequently sent from Tipu to the brink of the lake where the canoe was constructed and launched, and the Indians having in the meantime secured their harvest, fresh provisions were laid in and the expedition was resumed about the end of September. The lake of Yaxhaá was now crossed without difficulty, but fifteen leagues further on another was encountered, called Zacpeten (or "white island"), which they were obliged to avoid by striking into the mountains. The Tipu Indians seemed to have proved but very indifferent guides, —not because they were unacquainted with the road, but on account of the fear they entertained lest, on their arrival at Tayasal, the Itzaex should put them to death; and had it not been for the exhortations and steady perseverance of the missionaries, in all probability the journey would never have been accomplished. At length, after enduring the greatest hardships, they came within sight of Chultuna, the great lake of the Itzaex, and descended to the shore, where they took up their quarters and built a large hut, in which they erected an altar, to serve them for a church while they remained on that spot. The Fathers then despatched several Indians to Tayasal, to inform the Canek of their arrival; they were laden with the presents which had been brought from

Merida, amongst which was a handsome sabre, and a small quantity of the famous cacao of Tipu was added to them. The envoys were absent a whole week, and the unusual delay began to excite some anxiety, when a flotilla of four canoes arrived having them on board, together with the two caciques who had visited Tipu with other Itzaex. Mass having been said, the missionaries now embarked and crossed over to the Peten, or island, a distance of about six leagues; but long before they reached the city, they were met by a vast crowd of canoes filled with the leading people of Tayasal, with the Canek, and several members of his family at their head. When they came to the shore the drink of peace was offered them in cups filled with Zaca, and, as it was night, torches of *ocote*, a species of pine, were lit, to show them their way to the house set apart for their reception, a short distance from the palace of the Canek.

On the following day the missionaries prepared a room in their dwelling and set up an altar, before which Father Fuensalida sang the mass of the Apostle St. Paul, whom he selected and named the patron of the island, many Itzaex being present at the ceremony and observing it with silent reverence. After the performance of this duty, the Fathers repaired to the palace of the Canek, and, at the close of a long conversation, the Máya language being quite familiar to them, requested permission to go through the city, to see the houses of the inhabitants, and the Cués, or idol temples, in which they worshiped. This request was at once acceded to, and several Indian chiefs were appointed to conduct the missionaries, who resolved to take this opportunity of commencing their work of conversion. Accordingly, before they made the tour of the city, Fuensalida addressed

the multitude of Zamaguales, or common people, in the presence of the Canek and his chiefs, and expounded to them the doctrines of the Christian faith. Eloquent as, no doubt, the words of Fuensalida were, the impression which he produced on the Itzaex was not what he had expected. They listened with great attention; but when the worthy Father had made an end, they replied that they too had their prophecies, by which they knew that they were to become Christians, but that the time announced had not yet arrived. The Canek added that, such being the case, the missionaries might return to their own country, and come back at a future period, for at present it was the intention of the people to remain steadfast in their old religion.

Their dismissal was however accompanied by every demonstration of courtesy, and the missionaries were shown over the city, as the Canek had promised. It was both spacious and well built, the Zamaguales occupying the houses on the lower part of the island, and the more elevated being assigned for the dwellings of the caciques and the idol-temples. On going into one of the Cués, the Fathers saw in the midst of it the great idol, shaped like a horse, which the Itzaex, as has been already stated[1], adored as the God of Thunder, under the appellation of Tziminchac, "the horse of thunder," or "the thunderbolt."

But it was not with the veneration of the Itzaex, that Father Juan de Orbita gazed upon this statue. No sooner had he heard the legend of the horse of Cortes than his religious zeal awoke, and seizing a large stone he mounted upon the image, and straightway began to batter it to pieces, scattering the fragments over the floor

[1] *Ante*, Chapter V., p. 77.

of the temple. The Zamaguales raised a tremendous outcry when they witnessed the destruction of their favourite idol, and loudly clamoured that the missionaries should be put to death for having killed their god; but Orbita preserved a calm countenance, and Fuensalida, raising his voice above the din, addressed the enraged people. He declared to them that the idol was no true God, but only the image of an irrational animal similar to the deer, which they themselves killed with their arrows; that it had no power to do them good or harm, save by the permission of the Superior Being who created it, and them, and all things on the face of the earth, whom only they were bound to adore. He then, holding up a crucifix, dwelt upon the great sacrifice which had been made as an atonement for our sins, and called upon the Itzaex to believe in the only true God and Saviour, exhorting them with so much earnestness that they became dumb with wonder, and suffered the Fathers to leave the temple unmolested.

Fuensalida and Orbita directed their steps immediately to the palace of the Canek, who, though he had heard of what had occurred, manifested no anger nor made any allusion to it, which encouraged the missionaries to make another effort to convert him. A long discussion ensued, but though the Canek willingly accepted a cross from the hands of the Fathers, he still replied with the former argument, that the time for the adoption of the Christian faith by his people had not yet arrived. He did not hurry their departure from Tayasal, but the missionaries themselves became aware that the destruction of the idol had awakened a hostile feeling in the breasts of the Zamaguales, and felt that their stay was no longer secure.

Fuensalida therefore informed the Canek that they were ready to return to Tipu, and the Indians of their own party having prepared a canoe, they took leave of the King. Some of the more friendly Itzaex made them presents of the clothes they were in the habit of wearing, and gave them also a number of their smaller idols to take to Yucatan; but the general feeling of the people was so inimical to the missionaries, that on their voyage across the lake they had a narrow escape of their lives, being pursued by a party in several canoes, who pelted them with stones, and would have slain them with arrows, but for the interference of a Tipu cacique, named Gaspar Cetza, who chanced to be on friendly terms with the leader of the pursuing party. He told the Itzaex chief, that as the Fathers were going to leave their country, they ought not to seek further revenge on account of the broken idol. The chieftain sullenly replied, "Then do not bring those Xoïopes here again;" and the fugitives were suffered to proceed[1]. Freed from this danger, they made all haste to the shore, and, fearing lest the Itzaex might return, resumed their journey without delay, and at the expiration of four days found themselves once more in Tipu.

It was then agreed that Father Fuensalida should proceed to Merida, to give an account of what had passed at Tayasal, while Father Orbita remained at Tipu until his companion should return to prosecute a second mission to the Itzaex.

[1] They called the Spaniards "Xolopes" from seeing them eat the pinеapple, which was so called in the Maya language.

CHAPTER XIV.

ARRIVAL OF FUENSALIDA AT MERIDA.—IDOLATRIES OF THE TIPUAN INDIANS.—SECOND MISSION TO TAYASAL.—TREATY WITH THE CANEK FOR THE SURRENDER OF HIS DOMINIONS.—ERECTION OF THE CROSS AT TAYASAL.—OPPOSITION OF THE ITZALAN PRIESTS.—THE CANEK'S WIFE.—THE ITZAEX RESUME THEIR IDOLATROUS RITES.—THEIR VIOLENCE TOWARDS THE MISSIONARIES.—EXPULSION OF FATHER FUENSALIDA AND ORBITA.—THE TIPUANS ABANDON THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.—MISSION OF FATHER DELGADO.—PROPOSITION OF FRANCISCO MIRONES.—HIS EXTORTIONATE TRADE WITH THE INDIANS.—THEIR DISGUST AND DISCONTENT.—DELGADO GOES TO TAYASAL.—THE ITZAEX MASSACRE HIS FOLLOWERS, AND PUT HIM TO DEATH.—BERNARDINO EK SENT TO TAYASAL.—HIS CAPTURE AND ESCAPE.—CONSPIRACY OF THE INDIANS AT ZACLUN.—MURDER OF MIRONES AND FATHER ENRIQUEZ.—VENGEANCE TAKEN FOR THE ACT.—AHKIMPPOL HUNG.

FATHER FUENSALIDA arrived at Merida at the moment when a great festival of the Church was on the point of being celebrated in honour of "The mystery of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin," which the chapter of the cathedral in that city had made a vow to defend. He could not, consequently, secure immediate attention to his request; but as soon as the ceremonies, which were accompanied by fireworks, masquerades, bull-fights, tilting at the ring, processions, and other demonstrations of rejoicing, were ended, the Bishop and the Provincial eagerly addressed themselves to preparations for the

return of Fuensalida to Tipu. The Governor was more propitious on this occasion than before, and now supplied the missionary Father with the letters he asked for, enjoining all the Indians throughout Yucatan to render him every requisite assistance.

These orders appear to have been absolutely necessary, for neither the spiritual nor temporal obedience of the converted Indians remotest from the seat of Government were much to be depended on. Father Orbita experienced the effects of this failure in obedience, as soon as he found himself alone in Tipu, unsupported by the authority of the Governor, and deprived of the assistance of his companions; for not only did the religious zeal of the Indian converts completely evaporate, but they ceased to manifest any tokens of respect for the person of the worthy Father. It was therefore a great relief to Orbita when Fuensalida arrived from Merida, as his presence had the effect of compelling the people of Tipu to at least an outward demonstration of obedience; though it was soon discovered that their sincerity in religious matters was more than doubtful, a number of idols being found, which they were still in the habit of adoring with the dances and superstitious rites of their old heathen worship.

These practices might have continued with impunity, but for the opportune arrival at Tipu of the Alcalde of Salamanca de Bacalar, accompanied by the Licentiate Gregorio de Aguilar, the curate of the district, and several Spaniards who had been sent to visit and report upon the condition of all the towns in that part of Yucatan. After a strict inquiry had been made, the most guilty of the offenders were seized, and ordered to be publicly flogged, lighter punishments being inflicted on the rest.

A large fire was kindled in the square of the town; the sentences on the idolatrous Indians were read before it; the principal idols were thrown into the flames and burnt, and then the sentences were carried into execution. Threats were at the same time held out, that on conviction of any further relapse from Christianity, the offenders would suffer the punishment of death. This example had its effect, and, for a time, the people of Tipu devoted themselves with apparent earnestness to the performance of their duties as Christians.

Having checked this backsliding, the missionaries once more turned their thoughts to the conversion of the Itzaex; and Cristoval Ná, the principal cacique of Tipu, was despatched with a party of Zamaguales to Tayasal, to request permission for them to repeat their visit. The Canek readily granted this request, accompanying his assent with many expressions of goodwill towards the Fathers, who, thus encouraged, lost no time in availing themselves of the opportunity of renewing their Christian labours. Besides Fuensalida and Orbita, the party consisted of forty Tipuans, headed by Cristoval Ná, whose faith seemed never to have wavered amidst the defection of his countrymen.

An easier road than that by which they had formerly travelled conducted the missionaries to the great lake, where they found a number of canoes in waiting to convey them to Tayasal. The Canek received them with no diminution of his first welcome, and they were lodged in the same house which they had occupied the year before. At the expiration of eight or ten days the Tipuan escort announced their intention of returning, and the whole party, including Cristoval Ná, whose authority was unequal to control them, carried their resolve into effect.

Being now entirely left to their own resources, with nothing to rely upon but their courage and holy zeal, Fuensalida and Orbita addressed themselves at once to the purpose of their mission. The Canek appeared to show greater readiness than any of his subjects to listen to their doctrines; and while the Fathers endeavoured to secure his conversion, they thought it advisable not to neglect the temporal means by which it might be rendered more certain. They began therefore to treat with him, in the name of the King of Spain, about the form of surrendering his dominions to the Governor of Yucatan, and eventually arrived at the following agreement:— That the Canek should retain the caciqueship and government of Itza, as he then held it: that the title and authority should continue in his family, one of them, chosen by himself, to be his lieutenant, and assist him in the government: that for ten years the Itzaex should pay no tribute, and that, after that period, the King of Spain should fix the amount, which would be rated at a very moderate sum, in consideration of the peaceful submission of the country, and its adoption of the Christian faith. It was also agreed that the Alcaldes and other ministers of justice and government should be appointed from amongst the Itzaex themselves, according to the custom which prevailed in the province of Yucatan.

As if in ratification of this treaty, the Canek ordered a great cross to be made, and had it erected near his palace, that the Itzaex might adore it there, in fulfilment of the prophecy of their ancient priests, who had declared that the day would come when that signal should be raised, at the sight of which the nation should be called to the worship of the true and only God. Nor did the people generally evince any repugnance to the establish-

ment of the Christian emblem, nor show any signs of their former resentment. On the contrary, they now treated the missionaries with great kindness, and, though the latter were entertained at the sole charge of the Canek, forced presents upon them of provisions of all kinds, eggs, fish, cakes of maize, and a beverage called *pozol*, made also of Indian corn.

But notwithstanding this seeming adhesion, the missionaries were as far off as ever from the accomplishment of their great object, for a secret influence was at work to frustrate all their efforts. The Canek and many of his captains, the great mass too of the people, might readily yield to the exhortations of the Christian Fathers; but there was one class that was opposed to them on every ground that might excite opposition: this was the heathen priesthood, who saw in the substitution of Christianity, the overthrow of all their own authority and personal advantage. As the pious Villagutierre observes, "The rebel spirit had not forgotten how powerful is the persuasion of woman to deceive man,"—instancing, of course, the first temptation in Eden,—and the wife of the Canek was the instrument selected by the priests to destroy the work of the missionaries. They found her "apt," and, at their persuasion, she undertook to represent to the Canek how necessary it was to expel the Fathers from Itza, threatening her husband, if he opposed her wishes, to leave him for one of his caciques, named Nacompol, and declaring that neither she nor any of his people had any desire to change their religion, or ever would become Christians. The Canek, who seems to have been easily influenced on all occasions, did not refuse his assent to what she proposed; and the better to establish her hold on his mind, his wife

further persuaded him to go with her and the priests to a beautiful garden on the mainland, whither the Itzalanos were in the habit of repairing, to celebrate the worship of their divinities, with the feasts and dances which they called *Mitotes*. He would there learn, she said, that the Gods of Itza did not desire that the missionaries should remain any longer amongst them.

It chanced, at this time, that the Indians from Tipu had come to Tayasal, in all probability sent by Cristoval Ná, to see what condition the Fathers were in, and on the morning after their arrival observed a number of canoes assembled on the shore of the island, and learnt that the Canek, the priests, and a great many of the people were about to proceed to the garden to perform their idolatrous rites. The Tipuan Indians informed the missionaries of this expedition, but of what took place on the occasion they could learn nothing. It was evident however that the object of the Itzalan priests had been accomplished, for on the return of the Canek and his people, having been absent the whole day, none of them came as usual to visit the Fathers, nor was there any message sent.

On the following morning the fears of Fuensalida and his companion were changed to certainty, for scarcely had day broken before a large party of Itzaex assembled with arms in their hands before the house in which the Fathers dwelt. They entered without ceremony, tore down all the religious ornaments, collected the clothes and everything that was there, and told the missionaries that they must forthwith embark on the lake to return to Tipu, for that their presence in Tayasal would be endured no longer. The Fathers desired to speak to the Canek, who was not present, though he was cognizant of all

these proceedings, and witnessed them indeed from his own palace; but the infuriated Itzaex would listen to nothing they had to say, and hurried them down to the lake. Father Orbita made some resistance to the violence that was offered him, when a *Gandul*, or young Indian, came up to him, seized his hood, and twisting it at the collar, pulled with such force, that he brought Orbita to the ground in a state of insensibility, leaving the hood in the hands of the *Gandul*, who tore it in twain, dashed it on the ground, and outraged the holy Father by repeated kicks and blows. Fuensalida fared but little better, and it was well for them that they were not both killed on the spot. But the object of the Itzaex was to expel them at any rate, and, partly driven and partly dragged, Orbita, still insensible, being literally thrown on board, the missionaries were embarked with the three Indians from Tipu in a crazy old canoe, to find their way back to the opposite shore, or perish on the voyaage. Thanks to the exertions of the Tipuans, this calamity did not befall them, and Orbita having recovered from the ill-treatment he had received from the *Gandul*, the party landed in safety. The journey to Tipu was perilous and toilsome, and they suffered severely from hunger; a few cakes of maize and a small quantity of *pozol*, which the Indians had providentially secured, being all they had to subsist upon. Dejected at the ill-success that had now, for a second time, crushed their efforts, Fuensalida and Orbita resolved no further to attempt to convert the Itzaex, but made up their minds to return to Merida. The people of Tipu affected to regret their decision, but in reality were greatly pleased to hear it; and when once they were freed from the restraint which the presence of the missionaries en-

forced upon them, all further idea of continuing in the Christian faith was abandoned, and, in the course of a few years, not only the Tipuans, but the inhabitants of the greater part of the province of Bacalar, had again relapsed into idolatry. The churches were burnt, the houses levelled to the ground, the townships abandoned, and the mountainous districts became once more the abodes of the apostate Indians.

Into whatever errors the zeal of the Roman Catholic missionaries may, in the course of their ministry, have led them, sincerity and self-devotion were at all times conspicuous in their conduct. They needed no stimulus to exertion beyond the promptings of their own religious fervour, and the failure of an effort seems only to have furnished an incentive to its renewal, if not always by the same men, at all events by others equally ardent in the same good cause.

About a year and a half had elapsed since the return of Fathers Fuensalida and Orbita to Merida, after their expulsion by the Itzaex, when a provincial Chapter of the Order of St. Francis was held in that city, at which Father Diego Delgado, a Friar of that Order, having made a statement respecting the lamentable condition of the Church in the province of Bacalar, offered to go to the mountains to endeavour to re-convert the Indians who had relapsed into idolatry. This proposition was made in the beginning of the year 1621, when Arias Conde was the interim Governor of Yucatan. It was at once acceded to, and Delgado, furnished with the requisite letters, proceeded to his own convent at Xecchacán, to make the necessary preparations for his journey. When his purpose was made known there, several Indians of the place offered to go with him who were well

acquainted with the mountains, and he was also joined by others who volunteered to assist him on his mission.

His first effort was very successful, for by dint of great exertions and much preaching he collected together a numerous body of the wanderers in the mountains of Pimienta, and founded a town, which he called San Felipe y Santiago de Zaclun, on the site of a former town of the last-mentioned name. Delgado then, by the authority which had been vested in him, appointed Alcaldes and other municipal officers from amongst the Indians, and communicated the fact of his having done so to Don Diego Cardenas, who had in the meantime arrived from Spain to assume the reins of government, and who received the intelligence with great satisfaction.

It had a great effect also on the mind of another person, whose subsequent history is associated in a very melancholy manner with the occurrences which shortly afterwards took place in the southern part of what was then the province of Yucatan.

This man was Captain Francisco Mirones, at that time judge of the Cochineal territory on the coast, and a very brave and experienced soldier. He had long meditated the project of attempting to subdue the Itzaex by force of arms; and when he heard of the establishment of Zaclun, he conceived that the new town would afford him a more favourable point of departure for Itza than the difficult route which the missionaries had taken by the way of Tipu. He communicated his ideas on the subject to the Government, and argued the matter with so much ability that Cardenas gave his assent to the proposed expedition. An agreement was drawn up between them, the terms of which are not exactly known, further than that they principally related to the number of men,

and the various measures to be taken for the time being in conducting this war, till the circumstances should be made known to the King of Spain and the Supreme Council of the Indies.

As soon as this arrangement was made, Mirones set to work to raise men for the expedition, and when he had enlisted about fifty Spanish soldiers, marched with them to Zaclun, intending to wait there until the remainder of his recruits were collected; but this proved to be a work of time, and he was compelled to remain in Zaclun till the close of the year 1662. He was not however altogether idle, though it would have been much better for himself and all concerned had he been so. Being provided with numerous articles in which the Spaniards were accustomed to traffic with the Indians, he gave up his thoughts to trading with the inhabitants of Zaclun, driving such hard bargains, and overreaching and oppressing the natives to such an extent, that he greatly excited their disgust and resentment, and awoke a feeling which afterwards displayed itself in the most fatal manner. He was warned against this mode of proceeding by Delgado; but the remonstrances of the worthy Father only tended to excite Mirones to still greater acts of extortion, which increased the discontent of the Indians to such a degree that the town became ripe for mutiny.

In this state of things, and the disagreement between Mirones and Delgado daily increasing, the latter, after having fairly exposed the whole case in a letter to his Provincial, at the commencement of the year 1623, requested permission to leave Zaclun; and, as orders had in the meantime been received from Spain, forbidding warfare with the Itzaex, he further asked for leave to undertake a mission to Itza. This petition was granted,

and, as secretly as he could, Delgado quitted Zaclun, followed only by the Indians who had accompanied him from Xecchacán. He took the road to Tipu, but when his departure was known in Zaclun, Mirones became fearful lest some accident might befall him, and despatched an officer, named Acosta, and twelve men, to overtake him, and, if Delgado could not be persuaded to return, to escort him wherever he might go. This party came up with Delgado before he reached Tipu, and conducted him to that town in safety, and, as his orders were precise, Acosta remained there.

The missionary, firm in his resolve to go amongst the Itzaex, now sought for a messenger whom he might despatch to the Canek, to demand, as his predecessor had done, permission to visit Tayasal. The same faithful Cristoval Ná volunteered for that service, as he twice had done before, and performed it with the same result. The Canek gave the required permission, and Father Delgado, the Spaniards, the cacique, and eighty Indians to carry the baggage, took the accustomed road, and, being met on the shores of the great lake by the Itzaex, were carried over in their canoes to the Peten, with every demonstration of friendship and welcome.

But this aspect of affairs was of very brief duration, for scarcely had the strangers landed, when the whole of the people of Tayasal fell suddenly upon them, and, taking them completely by surprise, succeeded in making them prisoners. The Itzaex then bound their hands—Indians and Spaniards alike—and without further delay immediately put them all to death, with the exception of Father Delgado, who however was only spared till he had witnessed the fate of his companions. The manner of the execution of these unfortunate men was most

barbarous, and consonant with the universal treatment of their prisoners by the Indians of the whole peninsula. They first made a deep incision in the breasts of their victims, tore out their hearts, which, all warm and reeking, they offered as sacrifices to the idols, and then, cutting off their heads, stuck them on stakes, and planted them on an eminence where all might see them. When this scene of blood had been enacted, the Itzaex brought forward Father Delgado, whom they had kept apart to prevent his preaching from being heard, and before they put him to death told him the reason why they intended to do so: it was, they said, because he had not come to Tayasal alone, and because their idol had been destroyed, and their gods taken away, by Fathers Orbita and Fuensalida. Delgado listened with a placid countenance to the announcement of his fate, which, horrible as it was, and exactly resembling that of the rest, he met with the most heroic courage, continuing to the last to exhort them to Christianity. When he was dead, his body was cut in pieces, and his head placed also on a stake. Such was the end of this excellent missionary, and so, too, died the faithful cacique of Tipu.

From the time when the Spanish officer Acosta intimated his arrival at Tipu, Mirones was left in complete ignorance of what further had befallen the party, and, becoming anxious about them, despatched two Spaniards from Zaclun, in company with a very sagacious Indian servant of his, named Bernardino Ek, who was to serve as their interpreter and guide. Mirones gave them orders to proceed first to Tipu, and afterwards, if necessary, follow them to the country of the Itzaex, sending him word by some trustworthy messenger of the state in which affairs continued. When they reached Tipu, the

Spaniards and Bernardino learnt that Delgado and all his company had gone out to Itza, and, as the shocking events which had taken place at Tayasal were unknown to them, they also proceeded thither. On arriving at the brink of the lake, they made a large fire of leaves and branches, that the smoke from it might show the Itzaex that strangers were there who wished to cross to the Peten. On perceiving the signal, the Itzaex came over in their canoes, ferried the Spaniards and Bernardino across, and, when they landed, tied their hands, and conveyed them to an enclosure within very strong and lofty palisades, where they kept them for two entire days. On the third morning, a number of the Itzaex came armed with bows and arrows, and, taking them from the enclosure, paraded them through the city with great uproar and hostile cries, after which they took them to the hill where they kept the heads of Father Delgado and his companions, and having shown them these ghastly relics, carried them back to the palisaded prison, with the intention of sacrificing them the next day to their accursed gods.

The Itzaex left their prisoners shut up that night as before, surrounded by a guard who amused themselves with dancing, drinking, and great merriment, and finally fell asleep on their watch. Perceiving how quiet their gaolers were, Bernardino Ek suggested to his fellow-captives that they should attempt an escape, and worked so hard at his bonds, that he succeeded in freeing his hands, and then untied the Spaniards. Bernardino then quickly scaled the palisades, and waited outside them for his companions, but in spite of their efforts they could not succeed like him, their hands being so dreadfully bruised, and their wrists almost dislocated by the way in

which they had been bound. In the attempt to reach the top, one of the Spaniards slipped and fell back into the enclosure, and the noise awoke the Itzaex, who rose hastily to learn the cause, calling out loudly to each other. Hearing these voices, Bernardino ran down to the lake, got into a sorry canoe which he found on the beach, and plied the paddle with all the speed of a man escaping from the prospect of a cruel death. The Itzaex heard, and pursued him across the lake, following him even into the mountains on the opposite side; but he managed so effectually to conceal himself, that they failed to discover him, and desisted from the pursuit. As to the two Spaniards who were left within the palisades, their fate in all likelihood was the same as that of Father Delgado and his party, for they were never heard of afterwards. Bernardino Ek succeeded in reaching Tipu; from thence he went to Salamanca de Bacalar, where he laid his formal declaration of what had happened before the Alcalde of that place, who remitted it to the Governor, Don Diego de Cardenas, at Merida, and sent the Indians to Mirones to report the account to his master, who at first would not believe the news, and actually put Bernardino to the torture, thinking that he had deceived him. He soon found however that the statement which his servant made was the truth.

The policy of Mirones towards the people of Zaclun had not changed during the interval, and much discontent continued to prevail. He was urgent with the Government that some member of a religious community should be sent there to replace Father Delgado, and eventually Father Juan Enriquez consented to settle at Zaclun. He was conscious that there was great danger in taking such a step, but not aware that a con-

spiracy had been formed amongst the Indians, who were only waiting for an opportunity to carry their plans into execution.

The occasion presented itself on the 2nd of February, 1624.

On that day, which was the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin, Mirones and all his soldiers attended Mass without arms, leaving only one soldier at the guard-house in charge of them. The Indians, observing this neglect, stole to the guard-house, overpowered the sentinel, and seized all the weapons; they then painted their faces, and rushing with loud cries to the church entered tumultuously, and falling upon the defenceless Spaniards, took them all prisoners. The scene that took place is thus described by Villagutierre:— "Mass was not ended, only the consecration of the elements, when, guessing the cause of the uproar, Father Enriquez immediately consumed them, not however omitting any of the proper forms in doing so, and leaning against the altar, turned his face towards the Indians, while they were binding the Spaniards before they killed them. In a loud voice he called to Ahkimppol, the leader and priest of the Indians, to keep back his men, and consider the crime they were committing, or at least to let the innocent prisoners die like Christians, after confessing themselves. This all the poor Spaniards did, loudly declaring their sins. Ahkimppol then went up to Captain Mirones, who was tied to one of the props of the church (the pillars that supported its straw roof), on the Epistle side[1], and, taking a dagger or knife from the Captain's belt, struck him so fierce a blow on the breast that he laid it entirely open, on which he thrust in

[1] Epistle and Gospel side; the left and right, looking from the altar.

his hand and tore away his prisoner's heart. The rest of the Indians followed the example of their leader, and similarly sacrificed all the Spanish soldiers. While these ministers of Satan thus glutted their infernal rage, other Indians tied Father Enriquez, in his robes as he was, to another wooden prop opposite to the Captain, on the Gospel side. The Indians wished afterwards to loose him and leave him alive, but the sacrilegious Ahkimppol, without saying a word, came up to him and gave him a blow with his dagger, as he had done to Captain Mirones, and instantly tore his heart out of his body. To the moment of his death the holy friar, with great spirit, boldly preached to them without ceasing on the horrible and abominable impiety they were committing by their inhuman murders, and on the errors of their idolatry. All this was known by the subsequent confessions of many of the aggressors, who were taken and punished, for they left none of the prisoners alive to bear witness to what had passed. They dragged the crosses from the church, and cast the bodies of Father Enriquez and Captain Mirones into a grave made in the white earth, and, leaving them there, they took the rest to the cross in the road, by which the Spanish soldiers would pass who were coming to Zaclun. There they left them, each stuck upon a stake. They afterwards burnt the town and the church, and again fled to the mountains, to commit idolatry and lead a barbarous life[1]."

The Spaniards alluded to by Villagutierre consisted of a party of fifty men, under Captain Juan Bernardo, stationed at a town called Mani, but who, when the news was brought of the death of Father Delgado and his companions, were ordered to proceed in all haste to re-

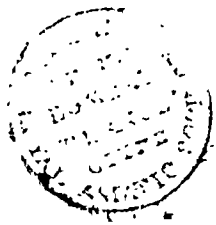
[1] Villagutierre, lib. iii. cap. 10.

inforce Mirones. On their way to Zaclun they met some Indians driving the mule of Father Enriquez, and being questioned where they were taking it, the latter replied, that they had been sent to Merida for some wine and provisions which were wanted. The Indians were therefore allowed to pass, and soon afterwards the Spaniards came to the cross by the wayside, where they found the mutilated remains of their unhappy countrymen. Captain Bernardo caused them to be decently interred, and, finding that no chance existed of effecting the purpose for which he set out, returned with his men to Merida.

Summary vengeance was executed on these murderers a short time afterwards, the greater part of them being made prisoners by an Indian captain, called Fernando Camal; Ahkimppol, their leader, did not escape, but was hung in Merida, refusing to the last to confess himself before death.

With this and other insurrections, especially that of the Indians of the district of Tipu, which happened some years later, the whole of that very extensive range of mountains, and the many tribes who inhabited it, became impracticably shut up and lost. The people of Tipu returned to their idolatry, and, closing the mountain passes, erected statues in them, "like ridiculous figures of Spaniards, and in front of them other formidable figures of idols, saying that they were the Gods of the roads, who kept them closed to the Spaniards, to prevent them from entering into their country[1]."

[1] Villagutierre.



CHAPTER XV.

CONTINUED DISTURBANCES ON THE NORTHERN FRONTIER.—CAMPEACHY SACKED BY THE PIRATES.—DON JACOBO DE YAKSON.—THE STORM AND THE MIRACLE.—CEDULA OF PHILIP THE FOURTH TO DON DIEGO DE VILLAQUIRAN.—PROPOSED SETTLEMENT OF EL PROSPERO.—VILLAQUIRAN ARRIVES IN YUCATAN.—MISSIONARY EXPEDITION.—THE JOURNEY TO NOHHAA.—RECEPTION OF THE MISSIONARIES.—TREACHERY OF VILVAO.—RETURN OF FATHER SIMON TO MERIDA.—VILLAQUIRAN SETS OUT FOR NOHHAA.—THE EXPEDITION DELAYED.—VILLAQUIRAN REACHES NOHHAA.—THE TOWN BURNT BY THE INDIANS.—VILLAQUIRAN TAKES REFUGE AT PETENECTE.—HIS DEATH.—ABANDONMENT OF THE SCHEME OF SETTLEMENT.

After the massacre of Zaclun and the revolt of the people of Tipu, who, abandoning that town, fled to the mountains, there to renew their old idolatry, the progress of "pacification" in the interior of Yucatan, to the south of Salamanca de Bacalar, was for some time suspended. Indeed, the Spaniards, notwithstanding their tenure of the country for nearly a century, held their ground in many parts but insecurely, the tendency of the Indians to apostatize and rebel being continually manifested. Thus in the town of Bolonchen, about twelve leagues from Campeachy, the natives rose on one occasion, put all the Spanish men to death that were there, and carried off all the Spanish women, children, and slaves, and all the moveable property which they could seize. In the

district of Zahcabahen revolt was general; the greatest atrocities were committed by the Indians, and it was long before order was perfectly restored. Petenecte also was the scene of a frightful massacre, and the southern frontier of the province was always in a state of disquiet and disturbance.

Nor were these the only evils which the Governors of Yucatan had to contend with, for piracy filled the seas of the western world, and their descents upon the newly founded Spanish towns became more and more frequent. Campeachy was constantly exposed to their attacks. In the year 1632, when Don Fernando Zenteno Maldonado held the interim government of the province, a fleet of corsairs, Dutch, English, French, and Portuguese, headed by a noted pirate, called Diego el Mulato, sacked the town for two days, and held possession of it till a sufficient ransom was paid for their withdrawal. They returned the following year, when the Mulatto made a prize of Doña Isabella Caraveo, the widow of Maldonado, who had died at Xecchacán. This lady had embarked at Campeachy for Vera Cruz, and was taken by Diego; but the corsair treated her with courtesy, and suffered her to accomplish her voyage. During the Easter of 1640 the same famous rover made a demonstration at Zizal, and in 1642 he landed at Salamanca de Bacalar, plundered the city and the churches, and ravaged the whole coast. But the most formidable descent was made in the month of September, 1644, when a squadron appeared off the western coast consisting of thirteen vessels, described by Cogolludo as "English pirates," though it was most likely they were filled by men of all nations. On board these vessels were fifteen hundred troops commanded by "General Don Jacobo

de Yakson" (James Jackson, it is to be presumed), "calling himself Conde de Santa Catalina[1]." He threatened Campeachy, and afterwards running southward, landed at Champoton, where his men committed the greatest outrages, profaning the churches, defacing the sacred images, and making numerous prisoners, amongst them several priests, who survived to tell how fatally the expedition terminated with regard to those who planned it. Three of the pirate-ships ran aground and were stranded on the coast, and of the remaining ten nine were caught in a "temporal" and foundered at sea, one vessel only, which had the priests on board, escaping total shipwreck. Father Andrés Navarro is the narrator of the direful catastrophe, which he describes as having been caused by miraculous interposition. "The pirates," he says, "consisted of Huguenots, Calvinists, Arians, Sacramentarians (who deny the real presence), Protestants, Zuinglians, and other different sects, and," to his great grief, "of some who were Catholics." Here are some nice distinctions with respect to the religious persuasions of the pirates; but we derive one consolation from the "Confusion Babilonica," as Navarro calls the assemblage, and that is, that the members composing it could scarcely all have been English. This reverend witness goes on to say that when the "temporal" broke loose he saw "Our Lady of Champoton and the eleven thousand virgins" (to whom he had previously commended himself) "in the waist of the vessel on board of which were the Spanish friars,"—an omen of the safety which awaited them when the pirates went to the bottom; and accordingly they were saved, and eventually reached the Havana[2].

[1] Cogolludo, p. 682.

[2] "Juraré con juramente afirmativo, que ví á Nuestra Señora de Champoton con las Vírgenes,

Having enough to do to repel external assaults and suppress rebellion within their own limits, the authorities of Yucatan forbore to extend either their arms or their religion beyond the districts which had acknowledged civilization. But the Kings of Spain, viewing the question from the other side of the Atlantic, could never bring themselves to believe that the difficulties were insuperable which prevented their delegates from making a complete conquest of all the lands that were peopled by the Indians. Guatemala and Yucatan were theirs already, and the intervening country must, in their opinion, be occupied. To this end, the issue of Royal Cedulas was of constant occurrence, addressed to the Viceroys, Presidents, Governors, and Audiencias of New Spain, Guatemala, and Yucatan, enjoining them to endeavour by all means in their power to propagate the doctrines of the Gospel, and bring within the pale of spiritual and temporal subjection all the barbarous tribes wherever their authority could reach.

The most precise and important of these Cedulas, because the objects which it desired to accomplish were more strictly defined and more capable of practical enforcement, was that which was expedited by Philip IV. from Madrid on the 29th of March, 1639.

An offer had been made to the King by Don Diego de Vera Ordoñez de Villaquiran, a captain in the Spanish infantry and retired Alguazil Mayor of the Inquisition of Barcelona, and at that period in possession

que anduviéron en el combés riñendo con los Ingleses, quando todos se ahogáron, y no quedó sino nuestro navio, en que ibamos entrambos Frayles. Y á mi vèr fué, porque despedaçáron de un alfanjazo la cabeça de Nuestra Señora, y la saqueáron á la Santa Imágen y a todo quanto tenia, y el castigo dignamente merecièron por el ahogarse todos, sin quedar ninguno á vida sino es nosotros, etc."—'Relacion' cited by Cogolludo, p. 683.

of the "encomienda" of Mita in the province of Guatemala, to undertake at his own expense the conquest and pacification of the warlike Indians who occupied the country bounded by Guatemala, Tabasco, Yucatan, Vera Paz, and Soconusco, on certain conditions of present and prospective personal advantage. This offer had been taken into consideration by the Royal Council of the Indies, of which Don Garcia de Haro, Conde de Castillo, was at that time President, and was finally agreed to. The chief stipulations were the following:—

Villaquiran was reminded in the outset that the projected "pacification" was to be undertaken at his own expense, and it was set forth that the people whom he was to reduce were "the Lacandones, Taiezaes, Mancheses, Tirumpics, Concaches and other barbarous Caraïbs, who eat human flesh and dwell in the country between the said provinces (Guatemala, Tabasco, etc.) which are peopled by my Christian vassals, as they and other barbarians, apostates and rebels, have stirred up that land." The title of Governor and Captain-General of the whole of the province, which thenceforward was to be called "El Prospero," was conferred upon him, as a reward for the services, trouble, and expense attendant on its reduction. The title was granted for Villaquiran's life, or that of his son or of the heir whom he might appoint. He was to administer justice in civil as well as criminal cases, with authority similar to that which was conferred upon the Governors and Captains-General of all the other Spanish West Indian Provinces, after having taken the necessary oaths with due formality; and obedience was enjoined upon all the officials and inhabitants of the province. Instructions were given to him as to the course he was to pursue in the deportation of criminals

to Spain, with regard to the payment of fines and penalties into the Royal Exchequer, and he was moreover told that he was to receive a competent yearly salary "from the maravedis collected for rents, tributes, and dues" belonging to the King; but, adds the Royal Capitulacion, "should there be no rents or perquisites, I am not bound to pay you anything."

Villaquiran's appointment was not, however, unattended by personal outlay; some heavy fees accompanied it. "You will have to pay," so runs the Capitulacion, "for your appointment, when called upon, one hundred and fifty double silver ducats into my royal exchequer of the province of Guatemala: your son, or heir, or any person you may appoint in his stead, will have to pay the same amount: and when you take possession you will also have to pay as a fee one half-year's salary, and a third of the perquisites and emoluments: and your successor will have to do the same when he succeeds to the government." There were other items with respect to the payments to be made if Villaquiran governed by deputy. Permission was given to him to correspond directly with the Council of the Indies, independently of all other viceroys or audiencias; and for this permission, when the time arrived for his enjoying it, he was further enjoined to pay the sum of one thousand ducats, which fine was to be renewed on the succession of his son or heir. Villaquiran arrived in Yucatan to prosecute the subjection of El Prospero in 1645. Don Estevan de Azcarraza was at that time Governor of the province, and offered him every assistance in his power. He met with a good reception also from the Provincial, it being a prominent feature of this, as of every other attempt to pacificate the Indians, to trust mainly to the instrumen-

tality of religious assistance. Villaquiran made the terms of his Capitulacion generally known, raised his standard, made a distribution of military offices, and offered terms of enlistment. He requested the Provincial to let him have missionaries, and the Father Preachers Hermenegildo, Infante, and Simon de Villasis were selected, the former acting as commissary to the mission.

The Friars, being anxious to precede the expedition, sailed in a small vessel from Campeachy in February, 1646, without the General being able to send them any assistance for their voyage, and after a very dangerous passage arrived at the small port of El Baradero, at the entrance to the Bay of Terminos. From thence they proceeded round the Bay to the Beneficio of Usumasintla, the most remote religious establishment of Yucatan, and situated on its very confines. They were here joined by the General, who arrived with only his wife, Doña Angela, and two servants, having left all his staff at Merida to collect the troops for the expedition. Villaquiran's object was to confer with the missionaries before they took their final departure, but he was unable to do more towards their comfort than give them two dogs which he happened to have with him, and it was to the Beneficiary, Juan Velasquez de Arismendi, that they were chiefly indebted for the means of prosecuting their journey; he gave them provisions, and paid for the boat which was to convey them from Usumasintla to that point up the river, from which they were to continue on foot. Villaquiran however furnished them with a letter addressed to Captain Juan de Vilvao, a Mestizo, in command at Nohhaa, and to the other Indian authorities in that place, ordering them to render every assistance to the missionaries, the object of whose journey he explained.

On the 3d of April the Fathers set out from Usumasintla, and at Tenozic, the last village in Yucatan, were met by twenty Indians from Nohhaa. It was not to welcome, but rather deter them from proceeding, that these Indians presented themselves, for they declared that the country was suffering from famine; but the missionaries were resolute, and persisted in advancing, poorly supplied as they were. Their first day's journey from Tenozic, under the guidance of the Indians, was a very distressing one, owing to the great heat and want of water, but it improved on the next, and by noon on the third day they arrived at a small farm, where the Mestizo Vilvao and the Cacique of Nohhaa awaited them. The journey that day had been a pleasant one, the road being skirted by lofty cedar, mahogany, and other well-grown trees, which cast a delightful shade, and by plants that bore all the fruits of a hot climate; they found amusement also in the number of monkeys that disported themselves in the woods, "great bearded creatures and small ones, which are very playful and entertaining[1]."

But there was not much more amusement in store for the missionaries, for no sooner had the Mestizo Vilvao saluted them, than his intentions declared themselves. Like the Indians whom he had sent to Tenozic, he was unwilling that they should proceed further, telling the Fathers that they were going to throw away their lives, the natives being so evilly disposed, that no subsistence was to be procured, and a variety of other figments of a

[1] "El camino de esta dia era bueno, cercado de alta arboleda de cedros, caobanos, y otros árboles, muy crecidos, que haziã sombra al camino, y gran cantidad de monos de los grãdes barbados, y de los pequeñitos, que son muy juguetones, y graciosos."—Cogolludo, lib. xii. cap. iii. p. 687.

similar nature. To all this the missionaries replied that God would protect them and provide for their wants, and so they pursued their way, with constant toil and great fatigue, until they arrived at Nohhaa. On approaching that town they were received by a great number of men, women, and children, who came out to greet them with branches in their hands, and forming into a procession accompanied them to the church, where prayers were offered up, and Father Simon addressed them in a brief discourse. On the following day he preached to the people, and dismissed them well contented, returning with Father Commissary Infante to the house of Vilvao. But their host's hospitality was of the scantiest, and the missionaries very soon had reason to complain of their treatment. The Father Commissary therefore wrote a letter on the subject to Villaquiran, but the Mestizo, suspecting that it was a complaint against him, took the letter from the messenger, and the General was left in ignorance of what had occurred. Vilvao, having the chief authority in Nohhaa, employed every means he could to disgust the Friars with their mission, and, amongst other things, endeavoured to prejudice the Indians against them, telling them that what Father Simon preached was all lies. The missionaries heard of these proceedings, and resolved to send an account of them to Villaquiran by a Spaniard, who had accompanied them, and to this man they confided their letters. But the Mestizo was determined, if possible, to prevent their delivery, and chose for the Spaniard's guides three of the least serviceable Indians of the town, instructing them to take him into the mountains and leave him there to perish; moreover, out of apparent kindness, he gave the Spaniard poison in some *pinole*,

which he was to drink on the journey[1], and the result very nearly answered his expectations, for the poor fellow took it, and was brought to death's door. He recovered, however, and was able to accomplish his journey to Campeachy, where he found the General, who thus became aware of the Mestizo's treacherous conduct. It would be tedious to detail all the devices which the Mestizo employed to annoy the missionaries, nor are the particulars more worthy of note than to show that the success of the mission could not, under such circumstances, be reckoned on. To establish matters on a better footing, Father Simon decided upon returning to Merida; but he was taken ill on the road, and when he reached that city remained so long confined by his malady, that his services in the cause of the mission were afterwards of no avail.

In the meantime Villaquiran had also returned to Merida, to make arrangements for marching with the expedition, which set out finally in the beginning of the year 1647, and took the route of Nohhaa. "But," observes Cogolludo, "although this cavalier was a good Christian, and of very capable intelligence in matters of speculation, he was very unfortunate in their execution; a twofold disposition working within him, which set his practice in complete opposition to his theories;" an augury this, of the ill-success which awaited him. Thus, instead of proceeding at once to Nohhaa, he halted for some time at Usumasintla, waiting, as he said, for further information from the Father Commissary Infante, by which delay he laid the foundation for the failure of the expedition.

[1] *Pinole* is a powder used in Yucatan to give the chocolate an aromatic flavour.

While Villaquiran was waiting at Usumasintla, affairs had gone badly at Nohhaa, for on the occasion when the Father Commissary proposed to have celebrated the Festival of the Institution of the Holy Sacrament, upwards of three hundred Indians assembled at one of their own feasts, and having drunk the customary "Balche[1]," went to the Infante, and told him that they had met to determine on remaining no longer in the town. They had, they said, entertained the thought, at first, of killing the Father Commissary and his companion, Father Gabaldá (who had joined him a short time previously), but reflecting that they had done them no harm, they meant to content themselves by taking away the priest's garments.

The Father Commissary entreated them to alter their resolution, but in vain; he was despoiled of his robes and the church ornaments, and the Indians abandoned the town for the mountains.

Instead therefore of hearing from the Father Commissary by letter or messenger, Villaquiran saw him arrive at Usumasintla in person. The Friar was very urgent with the General to give him twenty men to return with him to Nohhaa, representing that, with that number to support him, he could induce the Indians to re-enter the town; but Villaquiran replied, that he could not have such assistance till he went thither himself, and forthwith issued an order prohibiting any of his men from proceeding to Nohhaa. He suffered five-and-twenty days to go by in inactivity, and the soldiers, observing how lax was his discipline, stole away from his camp in such numbers, that at the expiration of that time five only remained in his company.

[1] "Bebida acostumbrada en sus idolatrías."

During this fatal pause, the cacique of Nohhaa and four other Indians arrived at Usumasintla, to ask pardon of the General for what they had done, saying that they alone remained in the town. Villaquiran was moved, on this, to do what he ought to have done long before, or have left undone now; he set out with his wife Doña Angela, his five soldiers, and the Father Commissary, for Nohhaa, which place he reached about the end of July, 1647. But he was entirely without money, and to obtain some, it was thought advisable that the Father Commissary should make his way to Guatemala, to solicit aid from the Royal Treasury. Father Infante set out for that purpose, and had proceeded as far the town of Palenque, distant thirty leagues from Nohhaa, when he was overtaken by a messenger with a letter, telling him that the General was very ill. During the Father Commissary's absence, Villaquiran had threatened to hang the cacique of Nohhaa unless he were supplied with provisions, and the Indians of the neighbourhood hearing of this meditated severity came down upon the town and set it on fire, the General being glad to escape with his wife, and the "poor remainder" of his men, leaving all the property he had behind him. He took refuge in Petenecte, a place about twenty-two leagues from Usumasintla, and here the Father Commissary found him both sick and delirious. Villaquiran's condition was truly pitiable, and what he could do to alleviate it, the Father Commissary performed; his first care being to send on another Friar named Elizondo, who had followed the expedition from Usumasintla, to fulfil the errand on which he had himself set out for Guatemala. Some months were consumed in this journey; and before Elizondo returned to Petenecte with a sum of fifty pieces-

of-eight for the relief of the General,—Don Diego Ordoñez de Vera y Villaquiran, Knight of the Order of Calatrava, and Adelantado of the (future) province of El Prospero, was dead. He lingered till April, 1648, being able shortly before his death to make his will, in which he substituted in the Royal Capitulacion the name of Don Estevan de Azcarraza, the Governor of Yucatan, for his own, in conformity with the powers allowed him, and also named the Father Commissary Infante, Abbot of El Prospero. But the Governor died of the plague at Merida the same year, and the pacification of El Prospero was abandoned.

Thus ended an expedition, if indeed it deserves the name, which had been heralded by such a magnificent prologue, and was brought to so miserable a close. Doña Angela did not long survive her husband, but died a few months afterwards in the city of Chiapa.

CHAPTER XVI.

MISSION TO THE CHOLÉS AND LACANDONES FROM GUATEMALA.—THE MISSIONARIES PROCEED TO CAHABON.—THEY REACH THE CLIFF OF ESCURRUCHAN.—THEIR WELCOME FROM THE CHOLÉS.—THE MISSIONARIES CROSS THE YAXHA.—NUMEROUS INDIANS BAPTIZED.—SAN JACINTO MATZIN FOUNDED.—SUCCESS OF THE MISSION AT COBAN.—RELAPSES.—A NEW MISSION.—DISCOVERY OF ANCIENT BUILDINGS.—THE MISSION RELINQUISHED.

AFTER the abandonment of the attempt to pacificate the country of the Lacandones, and establish the province which was to have borne the name of "El Prospero," an interval of several years elapsed without any renewal of the endeavour of the Governor of Yucatan to subjugate the interior, whether by secular force or religious persuasion.

But in the year 1675, the question of conversion was again brought forward, at the instance, it is averred, of some Indians of Cholé, one of the districts to the north of Vera Paz, conterminous, if not identical, with the south-eastern part of British Honduras. These Indians, who had been visited while on a mission by Father José Delgado, a Friar of the Convent of Santo Domingo, of Guatemala, came of their own accord to the city of Santiago, to request that ministers of the Gospel might be

sent into their country to baptize the people and establish the Christian faith. The Audiencia of Guatemala communicated this proposal to Father Francisco Gallegos, the Provincial of the Convent of Santo Domingo, and he, glad to avail himself of the opportunity, volunteered to go thither in person, choosing Father Delgado for his associate. They took the route of Cahabon, a town situated on the river of the same name, which swells the waters of the Polochic on its course to the Gulf of Dulce; and penetrating the mountains to the eastward, began their work of conversion by gathering together the first Indians they encountered, and forming them into a community or kind of town, to which they gave the name of San Lucas, a place which, like many others similarly founded, has no present existence. They also formed two other establishments or villages, which they called respectively Our Lady of the Rosary, and Santiago.

This part of the Cholé country was but thinly peopled, and, the number of converts amounting to barely thirty, the missionaries resolved to bend their steps in a northerly direction, where the inhabitants were more numerous. Taking with them some of their neophytes as guides, they journeyed about twenty leagues, where they found some more Indian families, whom they baptized and formed into a township, appointing an alcalde over them. But when the Fathers expressed their intention to proceed further, the Indians, one and all, endeavoured to dissuade them from doing so, urging the danger of the attempt, for, said they, the god of the mountains, Escurruchán, who dwells there in the likeness of a lofty cliff or rock, would not suffer them to advance. The missionaries, however persisted, and induced three of the

Indians from San Lucas (who, notwithstanding their conversion to Christianity, seemed to hold their ancient deities in great reverence) to go on with them; and, with the slight provision of a small quantity of chocolate and some biscuits, two hammocks for their beds, and a coffer containing church ornaments, they took the route to the forbidden pass, accompanied also by the Alcalde and two porters from the last-formed township. Their manner of travelling was characteristic: the Alcalde led the way, opening the road with a hatchet, the missionaries and Indians lending their assistance, and possession of the country being taken in the name of the King of Spain at every fresh encampment they reached.

Having crossed a wide stream called the Maytol, they again ascended the mountains and approached the cliff of Escurruchán. Here the Indians conferred together, and then represented to the missionaries that, if they desired to effect a passage in safety, they must make an offering of some *copal*, or incense, to the god of the mountains. Father Gallegos made answer, that his companion and himself were servants of the God who made the mountains, which they feared not, and that the incense which they carried with them was only to be used at Mass, and for no other purpose. They continued their way, driving their mules before them, and reached the summit without accident. There they found a small square space, which was swept perfectly clean and surrounded by a wooden fence, with a clear fire burning in the centre. They inquired the reason of this fire, and learnt from their guides that it was never extinguished, every Indian travelling that way considering it his duty to be provided with copal and other aromatic herbs wherewith to feed the flame. The Indians very urgently entreated the mis-

sionaries to make the same sacrifice, to which the latter replied that they had not yet been permitted to descend the mountain; but pledged their words that, if they did so safely, they would, on their return, make an offering of incense. The descent was effected without any obstruction on the part of the dreaded Escurruchán; but the Indian guides were either offended at the slight put upon their national deity, or were afraid to proceed further, for they here took leave of the Fathers, who were left alone with the two porters and their beasts of burden. They did not however remain long in solitude, their presence in the country being soon discovered by the roaming natives, numbers of whom flocked to meet them, with much courteous greeting. The usual salutations over, the missionaries declared the object of their visit to be to make the Indians acquainted with the knowledge of the true and only God; and that the King, whose subjects they were, had no desire to receive tribute from them for many years to come. Proselytism was never a difficult task amongst these tribes, and the Cholés, in reply, not only expressed their willingness to be converted, "but," says Villagutierre, "were so rejoiced at hearing this, that they embraced the Friars, saying, 'Welcome to our country; you come like the sun, the moon, and the fire, to enlighten us; our fathers and mothers being ashes at the feet of the devil for ever, in consequence of their ignorance[1]." We are further told by the same authority, so zealous were the Indians on this occasion, that a dispute arose among them as to which of their towns the Friars should visit first. "They opened a large and wide road for them, clearing it of all impediments, travelled in their company the whole day, with great re-

[1] Villagutierre, lib. iii. cap. ii. p. 154.

joicing, and when the Friars came to any stream which they could not pass on their mules, the Indians carried them over in their arms. If they descended a hill where they might accidentally slip, the Indians laid hold of their leathern girdles, and held them as firmly as if they had been fastened to poles, cautioning them at the same time to be careful; for they knew if the Friars were killed the Spaniards would exact their own lives as the penalty." There may be some exaggeration in this account; but one inference remains, that the Cholés were a tractable and gentle race, whose chief moral defect appears to have been that which characterized the Indians of this peninsula in general,—a too great facility of disposition, which showed itself most manifestly in the readiness with which they abandoned their national religion.

The first halt which the missionaries made was on the banks of a large and fine river, called Yaxhá[1], the water of which was esteemed the finest in the province. The Indians formed themselves into a circle round the Friars, and began to eat; the latter would willingly have done the same, but their slender stores were exhausted, and they were obliged to ask for some food. Several Indians immediately ran down to the river, and speedily caught some small fish, called "chillán," which were wrapped up in palm-leaves and then broiled over embers; these were eaten with "tamal," and sufficed to appease the hunger of the tired travellers. "On the following day the party arrived at the dwelling of a cacique named Matzin, who afterwards received the baptismal appellation of Don Martin; he supplied them with better fare, giving them

[1] The "Yasjá" of Baily's map of Central America; one of the head-waters of the Rio de la Pasion, which unites with the Lacantun to form the Usumasinta.

not only fish, but eggs and excellent cakes. The cacique also bestowed his company upon them during the repast, and, as all the Indians were gathered round them, and it was necessary to give a mouthful to each, Matzin grew angry, and said to the Fathers, 'Eat, that you may not die, and take no notice of them; they are at home[1].'"

Father José Delgado, who was well acquainted with the language of the country, now preached to the assemblage; they listened to him with pleasure, and requested that some of their children should be baptized. The rite was performed at once, the children chosen being those of the cacique, who undertook to form a town on the spot, to which the missionaries gave the name of San Jacinto Matzin. Conversion amongst such a people made rapid progress, and, passing onwards, several other townships of baptized Indians were founded; but the rainy season coming on, and apprehending scarcity, the Fathers determined upon returning to Cahabon. They therefore took leave of their converts for the present, assuring them of their speedy return, and on departing planted crosses in all the villages they had named. They again climbed the Escurruchán, and when they reached the summit the missionaries raised a large cross, and kneeling before it, performed their devotions with great fervour. The Provincial also performed his promise of burning incense on the spot, but took care to inform the Indians who accompanied him, that this was no act of

[1] "Levantáron de allí, y llegáron á otro dia en casa de un cazique, á quien llamáron despues Don Martin, que él se llamava Matzin, y les dió huevos, pescado y admirables tortillas. Assistió el Cazique á ver comer á los Padres; y como todos los Indios estavan rodeados de ellos, y era preciso darles algun bocadillo á cada uno, lo llevava á mal el Cazique, diziendo á los Religiosos: Comed, no os murais; dexadlos á ellos, que en su casa están."—Villagutierre, lib. iii. cap. ii. p. 155.

idolatrous worship, but one of devotion to the God whose religion he had come to make known in that land. No further incident occurred on their way back; they found the small towns of converted Indians in the condition in which they had left them, and reached Cahabon in safety.

The sojourn of the missionaries in that place was not long, for while they were in the country of the Cholés they had heard that in the neighbourhood of Coban there existed a tribe called the Axoyes, who were reported of as well-disposed to become Christians. The Friars therefore went to Coban, and, on the invitation of the Provincial, a hundred and eighty adult Indians of the Axoyes repaired to the town. It was discovered that these persons had already been baptized, and were anxious to confess and receive the sacrament: the first request was acceeded to, the missionaries being astonished to find how well versed the converts were in the doctrines of Christianity; but the Provincial being called away from that district, the celebration of the Eucharist was deferred.

In 1676 the mission was renewed, and with remarkable success, the Friars of San Domingo baptizing no fewer than two thousand three hundred and forty-six persons in eleven villages which they founded; and these numbers were subsequently increased to thirty thousand. But this willing adoption of a new faith, which has been spoken of as a characteristic of all the Indian tribes in Yucatan, seems rather to have had its origin in a craving after novelty, than in the desire for true enlightenment. The hold of the Christian religion upon the minds of the converts was very precarious, for it generally happened that in the absence of their teachers the Indians relapsed into their original idolatry; and such

was the case with the Cholés and Manchés in 1678, when a severe epidemic prevailed, which broke up the villages and scattered the natives far and wide: the roads were closed, cultivation ceased, and in a great degree the people resumed their former habits. The progress of conversion was moreover suspended, in consequence of dissensions and misunderstandings which arose amongst the civil and religious authorities of Guatemala, the Dominican and Franciscan Friars being accused of want of zeal, though what in truth they wanted was more efficient assistance, and funds for constructing roads, by means of which the country they desired to penetrate might be made accessible.

In the beginning of the year 1685 another movement was attempted, at the head of which was the Bishop of Guatemala himself, his coadjutors being the Provincial Diego de Ribas and Augustin Cano. They began to operate on three different points at the same time. The bishop entered the Cholé country by the way of Cohalco in Vera Paz, Ribas by Gueguetenango, and Cano by San Lucas. Nothing of any consequence was effected by the bishop, who sickened from the hardships which he underwent on the road, and returned to Guatemala. Neither do we find that Father Cano did more than settle at San Lucas, with the view of making it an important town, to serve as a *point d'appui* for subsequent operations; but even the religious establishment founded here was not of long duration, for towards the end of 1688 the inhabitants broke out into open rebellion, set fire to the town, burnt the church, apostatized, and fled to the mountains. Father Ribas employed greater personal exertion, and made good his entrance into the territory of the Lacandones. Proceeding from Gueguete-

nango, by way of Chiantlá, his party penetrated through roads which they made as they advanced, in a northerly direction, sometimes crossing a thickly wooded and mountainous country, and at others striking the banks of a large river, which, as it is said they travelled "with the stream," was most probably the Selegua, known, nearer its junction with the sea, in the Gulf of Campeachy, as the river Grijalva or Tabasco. Occasionally they came upon plantations of maize and other signs of cultivation; remains of ancient edifices of stone and mortar were found; and in one place an interesting building arrested their attention. It stood upon a high hill, and the ascent to it was by a circular flight of steps. On the top of the temple, which from the absence of fire appeared to be deserted, stood an idol a foot and a half high, in the shape of a lion. In the fervour of his religious zeal, Father Ribas ordered the whole to be destroyed, and in a short time not a vestige of the temple remained. In its place a cross was erected, the site was blessed, and the Provincial gave it the name of Nuestra Señora de Belen.

After this the mission travelled westerly for some leagues along some Indian tracks, and, following them up, fell in with a party of Lacandones, who fled precipitately on seeing them. These people the missionaries supposed to be spies, and a consultation was held, when it was resolved that they should not proceed further at that time, but return to Gueguetenango. In relinquishing the expedition, Father Ribas was anxious to show that he had no idea of giving up his first-formed project, and wrote a very full report of what he had done to the President of Guatemala, describing the country as excessively fertile, with plenty of fine water, abounding with

honey and tropical fruits, and of a far milder temperature than the mountainous region of Gueguetenango. He added, that a Spanish settlement might very easily be made in any part of the valley adjoining the great river, which would be serviceable not only on account of its productiveness, but because it was situated about half-way between Vera Paz and Ocozingo, and opened the way into Lacandon. This recommendation of Father Ribas, with regard to a settlement, does not appear to have been adopted; but advantage was afterwards taken of the route which he had indicated, when it was determined to pacificate the interior by the aid of a military force.

CHAPTER XVII.

MILITARY EXPEDITIONS AGAINST THE LACANDONES RESOLVED ON.—THE PROPOSITION OF DON MARTIN URSUA TO OPEN A ROAD FROM YUCATAN TO GUATEMALA.—THREE EXPEDITIONS ORGANIZED.—ADVANCE OF MAZARIEGOS.—PICTURESQUE SCENERY.—DISCOVERY OF A TOWN, WHICH IS NAMED "LOS DOLORES."—RETREAT OF DE BARRIOS.—FOUNDATION OF SAN JUAN DE DIOS.—JUNCTION OF DE BARRIOS WITH MAZARIEGOS.—NEWS OF VELASCO.—CAPTURE OF FIVE LACANDONES.—THE REPORTS MADE BY THEM.—RETURN OF THE LACANDONES TO LOS DOLORES.—RETREAT OF DE BARRIOS.—FRESH EXPEDITIONS.—NEW TOWN DISCOVERED.—ALÇAYAGA ENDEAVOURS TO REACH THE LAKE OF ITZA, BUT FAILS IN THE ATTEMPT.—ACCOUNT OF THE PROGRESS OF VELASCO.—HE PASSES THROUGH THE COUNTRY OF THE MOPANES AND APPROACHES THE LAKE OF ITZA.—ENCOUNTER WITH A PARTY OF ITZALANS.—FURTHER AFFRAYS.—VELASCO RETURNS TO MOPAN.—HE AGAIN ADVANCES TO THE CHAXAL.—MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE OF HIS PARTY.—AMEZQUITA FOLLOWS IN HIS TRACK AND COMES WITHIN SIGHT OF TAYASAL.—HE FINDS TRACES OF VELASCO.—INTERCOURSE WITH THE ITZALANS ON THE BORDERS OF THE LAKE.—AMEZQUITA FAILS TO DISCOVER THE FATE OF VELASCO, WITHDRAWS FROM ITZA, AND FINALLY RETURNS TO GUATEMALA.

It had long been felt by the local authorities that a merely religious mission was insufficient to accomplish the complete pacification of the central provinces of the peninsula; but without an express permission from the Royal Council of the Indies, neither the President of Guatemala nor the Governor of Yucatan durst venture to impart to it a military character. This permission

was granted in the year 1689 to Captain Juan de Mendoza, who had already been employed in reducing the natives of Honduras; and it was settled that, similarly to the religious missions, the troops employed should enter the province of Lacandon on three sides,—from Chiapa, from Gueguetenango, and from the side of Yucatan. But circumstances delayed the execution of this plan, and it was not till the year 1692 that any effectual measures were adopted, when a memorial, addressed to the King of Spain by Don Martin Ursua, who had been named as the future successor of Don Roque de Soberanis, the then Governor of Yucatan, praying that he might be employed to reduce the Lacandones, was taken into consideration and finally acceded to.

Ursua's proposal was, to open, at his own expense, a high road from Yucatan to Guatemala, passing through the provinces of Itza and Lacandon, and peaceably, by means of preaching the Gospel, to subdue the Indians as he advanced; but he dwelt on the paramount importance of first constructing the road, being of opinion that the establishment of a line of traffic would greatly facilitate the work of conversion. It was directed in the Royal Cedulas that the road should be opened simultaneously at both ends; that great care should be taken to select a spot for opening, where water could be obtained from day to day; that towns should be established from four to eight leagues apart, and that, in the event of its being difficult to accomplish this latter object, ventas should be constructed at intervals along the line for the convenience of travellers. It was further enjoined that the original project of entering Lacandon from separate points on the side of Guatemala should be adhered to.

The order contained in these Cedulas reached Guatemala and Yucatan in 1693, but the remainder of that year and the whole of the next passed away without anything being done, owing to the unsettled condition of the Government in each of those provinces.

The restoration of Don Jacinto de Barrios to the Presidency of Guatemala, afforded the first favourable opportunity of attempting to carry out the scheme of general pacification; and at the commencement of 1695 orders were issued for the simultaneous advance of three different expeditions: the first, from the province of Chiapa, headed by the President himself; the second, from Gueguetenango, under the command of Melchor Rodriguez Mazariegos; and the third, from Cahabon, under that of Diego de Velasco. A communication of this purpose was at the same time made to Don Roque de Soberanis, the Governor of Yucatan, with the request that he would co-operate on that side.

It will be advisable that for the present we should treat only of the efforts that were made from the province of Guatemala.

The rendezvous of the expeditions commanded by the President and Mazariegos had been fixed for Gueguetenango, and at that place the greater part of the troops, who were divided into companies of Spaniards and Indians, together with the ecclesiastical staff, including the Fathers Diego de Ribas, Pedro de la Concepcion, and Cano, with several more, assembled in the month of January. The President arrived there on the 23rd, and on the 29th Mazariegos was sent with his force to Istatan, being followed ten days afterwards by De Barrios, who had conceived the idea that he should find greater facilities for entering the Lacandon country from

Santa Eulália than from Chiapa, as it was nearer, and lay more to the eastward. But on reaching that place the President found he could not obtain the information he desired, and after conferring with Mazariegos at Istatan, respecting their future proceedings, he decided upon taking the route by Comitan, or that by Ocozingo: the latter was finally selected, and he arrived there on the 12th of February. It will be our province however to follow the fortunes of Mazariegos, as he was the first who made any discovery in Lacandon.

On the last day of February, the period fixed for his march being come, mass was said in the camp at a very early hour, and all the troops confessed, and received the sacrament at the hands of the Provincial Ribas and Father Pedro de la Concepcion. Mazariegos then set forward at the head of his division, and advanced towards the mountains in a north-easterly direction. The progress of the troops was very slow, in consequence of the rugged nature of the ground, the steepness of the hills, the density of the woods, and the slipperiness of the soil, occasioned by the small fine rain that was constantly falling. Five leagues from Istatan they came upon the vestiges of some ancient edifices of stone, put together with the usual skill of the Indians of this country; but what purpose they had served could not be ascertained, as the walls that remained rose little more than a yard from the ground, and the interior was thickly overgrown with trees. They encamped that night on the bank of a stream called Chimp, having performed a day's march of seven leagues.

On the following day the troops resumed their route, cutting their way through the same kind of rough, broken country, all enclosed by lofty mountains. They

were filled with enormous monkeys, turkeys, pheasants, quetzales, and other birds of fine plumage, and numbers of hogs were seen, of a kind that have a gland on their backs, which must be cut out as soon as the animal is killed, or the flesh immediately becomes tainted. They found also abundance of honey, an excellent vegetable called "pacayas," and some "*soste*" trees, which yield a resinous gum that gives out a very sweet smell when the wood is burnt. This day they marched eight leagues, and arrived at night at a place called by the Indians Labconop, which had been visited by Father Ribas in the expedition of 1685, when he gave it the name of San Pedro Nolasco. In this manner the march was continued, till, on the sixth day, the troops came to a great hollow in the mountains, more than a league in diameter, where there were more remains of ancient buildings, but similarly overgrown by trees and thick underwood. The spot was further remarkable for a small lake, which disclosed an outlet for the waters which it received from a rapid mountain-torrent. It was necessary to make a halt at this place, as the cattle and baggage were some distance in the rear, and the intricacy of the country had greatly increased. A small party was therefore sent on to explore, and, after a day's absence, word was brought back that a broad river ran in front of the line of march. It was forded on the 10th of March, the name of "San Ramon" being given to it, and the expedition continued its further course along its banks, which, where it was level, were fringed with cocoa-nut trees; in the river was abundance of fish, consisting chiefly of "moharras," "icoteas," and others of the same prickly sort, besides "water-dogs" ("perros de agua"), and alligators; king-fishers, herons, and geese, flew over its waters, and the

woods were thickly peopled with parrots, macaws, pheasants, and an endless variety of many-coloured birds.

The beauty of the scenery was increased, but the difficulties of the march were by no means diminished. At one moment the expedition was hemmed in by high and densely-wooded hills, at another its progress was stopped by inaccessible cliffs, and the labour to clear a passage was everywhere excessive. The San Ramon was crossed and re-crossed several times, discovery being made of another river, broader and deeper than the first, which received the name of San José. Between these two streams the troops pursued their route, anxiously looking out for traces of the Lacandones, whose territory, it was presumed, they had fairly entered. At length they made the discovery of some cuttings of firewood, and the charred remains of sticks half-burnt, which assured them that the Indians could not be far off. A few leagues further on they found the impression of naked feet on the sandy shore of one of the rivers; then they came upon a "tapesquillo," or fire-place, where fish and other food had been dressed, the shells of the icotea and skins of the plantain being amongst the fragments; the marks of a canoe, which had been hidden amongst some reeds, afforded further indications of being nearer the objects of their search; and finally a hut and a narrow pathway were descried by an exploring party which was conducted by Father Pedro de la Concepcion. The path led towards a plain, in the midst of which the missionary beheld a town, to which, as it was discovered on Good Friday (April 6th, 1695), he at once gave the name of Los Dolores, and sent back the Indians who accompanied him to convey the news to the camp, while he went on, and, undismayed, entered the town alone.

Father Pedro's reception by the inhabitants was at first of a very doubtful kind. The people came flocking round him, surprised at the novelty of his garb and general appearance, and their language and gestures were far from encouraging; but they became calmer as they listened to his words, though his knowledge of their language was but imperfect.

In the meantime, on the receipt of the intelligence of Father Pedro's discovery, Mazariegos ordered the expedition to move onwards towards Los Dolores. As they were ascending a hill two Lacandones suddenly appeared at the top with bows and arrows, and presently afterwards a body of upwards of sixty more showed themselves similarly armed. The missionaries advanced in front of the Spaniards bearing crucifixes in their hands, at the sight of which the Indians paused, and one of their number knelt down and wept; another however, less given to the melting mood, advanced for a different purpose, and made a snatch at the *machete*, a short sword worn by one of the Christian Indians, but failing in his attempt, and being thrust backwards into a brook, he leapt up, and, taking an arrow from his quiver, bent his bow and prepared to shoot. The Spaniards upon this made a movement to advance, which caused the Lacandones to cry out repeatedly in a loud voice, "Utz impusical, utz impusical" (literally, "my heart is good"), to signify that their intentions were not hostile. No weapons therefore were drawn, and while the Spaniards remained uncertain what their gestures and words implied, the Lacandones gradually drew off. It was not thought advisable to make any further advance till the baggage came up, and the troops, retracing their steps for a short distance, encamped for the night. On the

following morning they were joined by Father Pedro, who came from Los Dolores, and gave a full account of what had happened to himself. He said that, on the return of the Lacandones to the town, after having seen the Spaniards, they treated him with more respect, giving him to understand that his countrymen would be welcome on their arrival. But he was not himself of that opinion, as he had observed that the natives had been occupied during the night in taking the lighter moveables out of their houses, and in making sacrifices of fowls to their idols, from which he concluded that it was their purpose to evacuate the place.

Father Pedro was right in his conjecture, for when the troops that afternoon entered the town, they found it entirely deserted, not a single person being visible. There were, however, plenty of stores left behind, the houses being filled with maize, beans, and cotton, together with the women's weaving instruments, shooting-tubes for blowing arrows, calabashes, grass-ropes, and a variety of tools and other implements, all made of stone; the small beds of clean reed-grass in which the children were rocked, arranged and tied with great precision, were still hung over the "tapescos," or fire-places, after the usual fashion, which enabled the mothers to give their infants suck while they were cooking. Many domestic fowls, Spanish as well as native, were also found, besides numerous dogs and tame macaws. The number of houses in Los Dolores amounted to one hundred and three, of which a hundred were private dwellings, two, much larger than the rest, were appropriated to general purposes, and a third, larger still, served as a temple, for it was filled with idols of strange shapes, and contained brasiers in which the ashes of the gum-copal

incense were yet warm. These last-named relics were all destroyed, and the temple was straightway converted into a church; the Spanish troops made barracks of the larger houses, and the Indian soldiers, with the stores of the expedition, occupied the rest.

It was a source of great inquietude to Mazariegos and the Missionary Fathers that none of the inhabitants were to be seen, for they could not tell what was the actual disposition of the people towards the expedition; but after the matter had undergone considerable discussion it was finally decided that they should continue to occupy the town until news could be obtained of the President Don Jacinto de Barrios. Mazariegos also gave orders that nothing belonging to the Lacandones should be taken from their houses, and every effort was mode to draw some of the fugitives back to the town, that they might perceive the object of the Spaniards was not to injure them or their property.

While the first division of the expedition had thus far successfully prosecuted their journey, the President of Guatemala had entered Lacandon from Ocozingo. The identical spot to which the unfortunate Villaguiran gave the name of El Prospero, as the future capital of the province, which was so designated in the Royal Cedula, cannot easily be ascertained, but it must have been at no great distance north-eastward from Ocozingo, since we find from Villagutierre that the first day's march of the President terminated at a locality which received the additional appellation of Santa Cruz, and was supposed by him to be the site of El Prospero. There was nothing to fix its identity, not even a hut, and the stone cross which was raised by the troops marked only their point of departure from the province of Chiapa.

It would be only a repetition of what happened to every expedition from the time of Cortes downwards, to describe the difficulties and dangers of a march through a country not at all improved in its means of communication since the conqueror of Mexico passed that way. It will be enough to say, that when the President, on the 12th of March, reached the place which bears the name of San Juan de Dios, he was forced to remain there for eight days to refresh his men, though the quantity of venomous snakes that swarmed there rendered it anything but an agreeable halting-place. At the expiration of that time the march was renewed towards the east, and on the 30th of the month he paused for a fortnight at the foot of a mountain called Monte Santo. A broad lake was the next impediment to the progress of the troops; and while the country was being examined, to see if a road could be made round it, one of the parties so employed captured a naked Indian, one of four whom they found armed with bows and arrows in the woods; his three companions fled, leaving their weapons behind them, but the captive discharged all his arrows at the Spaniards before he was taken. He was brought into the camp without being ill-treated, and the President determined upon making use of him as a guide towards the chief town of Lacandon.

The Indian, who was treated with great kindness, led the expedition to the banks of a considerable river, where had formerly been a wooden bridge, in all probability one of those constructed by Cortes, but of which only a single beam or plank remained. This being of no service as it stood, the troops were at once employed in cutting away the banks so as to admit of the river being forded. While they were thus engaged several men

were seen approaching, and as they drew nearer, to the infinite surprise of the President, he recognized Captain Mazariegos, who, with a party, was exploring the country, in hopes of obtaining some tidings of his expedition. This meeting was as joyful as, on the part of the President, it was unexpected, and he heard with interest of the discovery of the town of Los Dolores, though it was equally a subject of regret to learn that the inhabitants had fled. On the 19th of April De Barrios reunited his troops with those of Mazariegos, and the question then arose as to what was to be done next. A council of war was held, at which the question was discussed, whether it would be desirable to send the missionaries, under the guidance of the Indian prisoner, to pacificate the country by preaching, or whether the Indian should be set at liberty, and encouraged by presents to persuade his countrymen to return to Los Dolores. The latter course was adopted, and after he had been taken over the town, and shown that nothing had been touched that belonged to the Lacandones, he was dismissed, and took his way to the mountains. He left behind him his "petaguilla," or small travelling-basket, and other things belonging to him,—a token, the Spaniards thought, of his intention to return,—but he was never seen again.

At this juncture a messenger arrived in the camp with a letter from Captain Juan Diaz de Velasco, which had been forwarded by him to Guatemala, and was now sent on to De Barrios by the Vice-President Escals. It was written from Mopan, whither Velasco had been sent on his way to Itza, and related what had befallen him, to the following effect. On quitting Cahabon with his party, accompanied by Father Augustin Cano as the

chief missionary, he had passed through the country of the Cholés, a great number of whom he brought under submission, and had then entered the territory of the Mopanes, hitherto unexplored by Christian men. After encountering various difficulties, he had succeeded at last in making friends of this tribe, and, hearing that the climate was excellent, and the land extremely fertile, he believed that a Spanish settlement might be very advantageously made in the centre of Mopan; and on this account he now wrote, to obtain the sanction of the President of Guatemala to form an establishment there. Velasco added, that the Mopanes, who numbered about ten or twelve thousand families, occupied the very heart of the mountain country of the Infidels; that to the south of Mopan was the province of Chol, to the east and north the nation of the Itzaex-Petenes, and to the west the Lacandones and Xoquinocs. We shall have occasion shortly to speak further of Velasco's expedition, but for the present we must continue with that of the President.

De Barrios was well pleased to hear that Velasco had advanced so far on that side, and, considering what had also been effected by himself and Mazariegos, augured favourably of the termination of the attempt to pacificate the whole country. He resolved to proceed with the greater part of his troops towards the great Lake of Itza, after securing Los Dolores within a strong palisade, and establishing a Spanish garrison for its defence. The fortifications being completed, and leave having been given to several of his men to return to Chiapa, on account of sickness and private affairs, the President prepared for his march to the Petenes. He was on the very point of departure, when the advance was countermanded, in

consequence of a party of the soldiers who were going home having returned with five Lacandone Indians whom they had taken prisoners on the road.

"All that evening," says Villagutierre, "was spent in carousing and welcoming the prisoners, who seemed by their behaviour to be very joyful, going through their games and dances with the other Indians of the army, saying that they had a good heart, and asking, by their signs and gestures, if the Spaniards had a good heart too, with more to the same effect, all showing partiality and affection towards them."

The next day, by order of the President, and in conformity with the opinion of those who voted in the councils of war, the Lieutenant-General Bartolomeo de Amezquita took their declarations by means of interpreters. With great difficulty, partly by signs and partly by inference, he was enabled to understand, if not what they said, at least what they meant to say, which amounted to this:—that they and the other inhabitants had fled from the town, because of the report of the fire-shooting tubes[1] of the Spaniards (so they called the muskets), that they were all scattered about in the woods and mountains, and that they would go there to call and assemble them, and tell them that the Spaniards had a good heart. They said that they had no town but that, for the others had been burnt, and the inhabitants were wandering in the woods and mountains. The same thing had happened to five other towns on the borders of the neighbouring lake, a little lower down, by two other rivers much larger. The Lacandones said that they had canoes on that river, which were now hidden;

[1] In the original, "Zerbatana," an Indian tube for discharging arrows or balls by blowing.

that their wives and children were in the woods, where they might die of hunger, as they had nothing to eat but fruits and roots, and were without maize or anything of that kind. They concluded by saying, that in going up the river it was fifteen days' journey from thence to Coban, and eighteen days by land, and that the Indians of Coban used to come down and have intercourse with the Lacandones[1]."

By the employment of these Lacandones, with a missionary, and an escort of war-Indians, a body of ninety-two of the inhabitants of Los Dolores were induced to return, and amongst them were included the Cacique of Lacandon, named Cabnal, and his wife. All the houses of these people were given up, and the friars and soldiers who had lodged in them were encamped in huts outside the town.

The project of marching upon Itza was now resumed, but it was not thought expedient that the President should go thither himself, and Amezquita, with one part of the troops, and another party under Captain Lorenzo Morador, were despatched in the direction of the great lake. They were absent for several days, but dependent entirely on the information they received from their Lacandone guides, who first misinformed them as to the relative distances of Itza and Mopan, and then deserted them. When the periodical rains set in, both commanders decided upon returning to Los Dolores. It was then that the President, perceiving that nothing more could be accomplished that season, came to the conclusion of withdrawing the whole of the army from Lacandon, with the exception of a garrison of thirty Spanish soldiers and a body of war-Indians, who were left in Los Dolores,

[1] Villagutierre, lib. iv. cap. 18.

under the command of Ignacio de Solis. Owing to the heavy rains, which swelled the rivers and flooded the roads, the troops endured greater hardships on their retreat than on their first march; but, on the 4th of July, they all arrived in safety at Santiago de Guatemala, where they were disbanded for the winter.

With the opening of 1696 the preparations for effecting a junction with Yucatan through the province of Itza were resumed; but before the enlistments were completed, Don Jacinto de Barrios died. He left the government of Guatemala, both civil and military, under the charge of Don José de Escals, the former Vice-President, who lost no time in carrying out the intentions of his predecessor. A twofold expedition was determined on: Don Bartolomeo de Amezquita was named to the command of the troops that were to enter from Vera Paz into Mopan, and Don Jacobo de Alçayaga to that of the second expedition into Lacandon.

Alçayaga proceeded direct from Gueguetenango to Los Dolores, where he found upwards of five hundred Indians peaceably settled; they had readily submitted to be baptized, and performed their Christian duties in a very satisfactory manner. Leaving Los Dolores, Alçayaga went in search of some of the other towns of which the Lacandones had spoken, and succeeded eventually in discovering two, named Peta and Mop, though in what precise locality is not stated. Peta contained a hundred and seventeen families, and Mop a hundred and five, and the inhabitants of both places yielded very readily to the exhortations of Father Ribas and his reverend associates to become Christians. They agreed also to a singular proposition for concentration,—that of burning the towns they lived in, and going to settle at Los Dolores. We

do not hear further of the proposed conflagration, but many families at once carried the design of removal into execution.

After the discovery of Peta and Mop, Alçayaga was of opinion that no more Lacandone towns existed, and his thoughts turned upon the Lake of Itza. He seems to have been more desirous of the fame of a discoverer, than of completing his share of the great road between the two provinces, for instead of advancing by land in the direction of the Petenes, he cast about for the means of approaching it by water. He considered that this could be effected by descending the river Lacandon, and gave orders for the construction of fifteen pyrogues. When they were ready, he embarked the troops and missionaries, and committed himself to the course of the stream. After descending for a distance of thirty-two leagues he met with another river, carrying a much greater body of water, a hundred and sixty yards wide. "It ran," says Villagutierre, "between Vera Paz and Campeachy" (rather a vague definition), "and uniting with the Lacandon, receives lower down several minor streams, which altogether discharge themselves into the North Sea[1]."

[1] It is impossible to determine with any certainty the actual site of Los Dolores, or even to ascertain exactly what are the rivers so frequently spoken of in this expedition to Lancandon. Baily's Map of Central America, published in 1850, is the most elaborate of any we have met with, and has the appearance of having been constructed on authoritative grounds; but still the description given by the old Spanish writers, and by Villagutierre in particular, are utterly discrepant with the positions which Mr. Baily assigns to several remarkable places. Los Dolores, for instance, is marked in the map as situated considerably to the south-east of the Lake of Itza, near the source of a river which takes its course to the eastward, and is either the Belize, or else falls into it; while the context of Villagutierre's narrative assures us that if the expedition descended the Lacandon they must have travelled in a north-westerly direction. In this case, the town of Los Dolores must have been greatly to the south-west of the Lake of Itza, and indeed no other position is reconcilable with the historical account.

Instead of proceeding with the stream, Alçayaga now turned back on their former course, and ascended the newly-found river for one hundred and forty leagues[1], making a close search along its banks in the hope of discovering traces of an approach to the capital of Itza. But he was wholly unsuccessful, and finding that his men began to sicken and provisions to fail, he gave up the attempt and returned to Los Dolores, after an absence of fifty-seven days fruitlessly spent. With this effort the operations ceased that were to connect Guatemala and Yucatan on the side of Lacandon; but besides the failure of Alçayaga, there were other determining causes arising out of the expeditions which were sent to Mopan, and these must be briefly described before this sketch of the measures which originated in Guatemala can be concluded.

After forwarding his despatches to Santiago, Juan Diaz de Velasco moved onward from Mopan to the frontier of the territory of the Itzaex, and pitched his camp on the 1st of April, 1695, at a distance of about forty leagues from the great lake, according to the account given him by his guides. He then sent forward two Spanish soldiers and a Mopan Indian, to explore the route. They made their way to within about four leagues from the lake, where they encountered a party of thirty Itzalans, well armed, who were out hunting. The Itzalans, on seeing the strangers, rushed towards them with loud outcries, and the Spaniards, through the interpretation of the Mopan Indian, demanded a parley, and stated the object for which they had come. The only

[1] This distance must be greatly exaggerated; even the convolutions of the Rio San Pedro, if we suppose that river to have been the one in question, would not have afforded so much.

reply which the Itzalans made was to bend their bows and salute the strangers with a flight of arrows. This provoked the Spaniards to fire in return, and three of their enemies were killed, on which all the rest took flight. The victors then fell back to rejoin Velasco; nor could they have escaped the pursuit which followed their retrograde movement, had they not stopped it by setting fire to the long dry grass of the savannah. By this means they were enabled to unite themselves with Velasco's force, which they met advancing.

On arriving at the banks of a very clear and beautiful river, called the Chaxál, ten leagues from the lake, Velasco pitched his camp, till the country round was explored. To this end he sent out a party of twenty Spanish soldiers and twenty-five war-Indians, who, on reaching the great savannah, fell in with a solitary Itzalan. They wanted to question him, but he took to his arms, and, had it not been for their wadded coats, many of the Spaniards would have been wounded. His movements were so quick and agile, that it was some time before they could take him prisoner; but when at last they succeeded in doing so, he was bound and sent into the camp. On the following day ten more Itzalans were met with, and an affray ensuing, six of their number were killed, one was made prisoner, and the remainder fled. The captain proved to be a cacique of one of the towns on the borders of the lake. He gave out, and truly enough, that his countrymen were exceedingly numerous in the islands on the lake; and Velasco, finding that his force was too weak to attempt to cope with a people so warlike as the Itzalans, yielded to the representations of Father Augustin Cano, who accompanied him, and consented to retreat to Mopan. When

the intelligence of this resolution reached the Vice-President Escals at Guatemala, he was extremely indignant, and sent stringent orders to Velasco to return to the banks of the Chaxál, construct an entrenchment there, and maintain his position. Velasco disobeyed these orders, and, on learning his disobedience, Escals directed him to give up his command to Pedro de Horozco, and return within twenty days to Guatemala, on pain of death, and of being declared a traitor; Horozco received instructions at the same time to occupy the position on the Chaxál. While these orders were on their way, Escals received a letter from the President Don Jacinto de Barrios, informing him of his intention to return from Los Dolores, and counter-orders were accordingly sent to Horozco. It is not known whether these fresh instructions were received, but Horozco remained with a garrison in Mopan, while no further proceedings were taken against Velasco.

In the following year, as we have already stated, a fresh expedition to Itza, by way of Mopan, was determined on, the command of which was given to Amezquita. He reached Mopan about the end of February, 1696, and paused there to complete his arrangements. It was then represented to him by Velasco, that an immediate advance upon Itza was necessary, and he offered himself for that service. His former disobedience was overlooked, and Amezquita entrusted him with the command of five-and-twenty men, with orders to proceed to the Chaxál, incorporate his troops with some who had already gone before, together with a party of Zamala Indians, and not advance more than six leagues beyond the river; he was then to halt, and send on the Itzalan cacique Quixan, who had been made prisoner

in the former expedition, as an ambassador to the Peten, and, as soon as he received an answer from thence, to forward it to General Amezquita and await his further directions.

In so far as related to combining his force, Velasco obeyed his orders, and by the time he reached the Savannah of San Pedro Martyr, he found himself at the head of forty-nine soldiers, besides thirty-six Zamala Indians, all of them admirable archers; but instead of waiting for the General, he at once pushed on; and his subsequent fate, with that of his troops and the missionaries and servants of his party, was thenceforward involved in mystery.

It was not many days after Velasco's departure from Mopan, that Amezquita followed, with the main body of the troops. At the Savannah, he learnt from those who had been left in charge of certain stores, that Velasco had set out from thence with his people on the 12th of March, and so lightly accoutred that many of the soldiers left their kits behind. Amezquita continued to advance, hoping to hear news of the embassy to the Peten, but even when he reached the Chaxál there were no tidings either of that occurrence, or of the position of Captain Velasco. He waited for three days, and then, becoming impatient, took with him a party of twenty soldiers and some Indians, with provisions for only four days, and set out in search of the missing party. His first day's march was eight leagues from Chaxál, but still all was a blank; the second day, and the result was the same; on the third day the track of Velasco was discovered by the marks which his troops had left of their having passed the night at a Xagui, or watering-place, about fifteen leagues from the Chaxál. Under the im-

pression that the lake could not now be far off, and that Velasco had disobeyed orders to be the first to reach it, Amezquita hurried on, and, after two more leagues, beheld it stretched out before him, and in the centre the large Peten, rising in the form of a sugar-loaf, with many smaller islands scattered around.

On a nearer approach to the shores of the lake, Amezquita could discern the city of Tayasal, and notice that the whole of the neighbouring country was covered with villages. He continued along the brink, following the tracks of horses and mules, which he could have no doubt were those of the people of Velasco, as pieces of leather and one or two saddle-cloths were found. At the mouth of a creek two Itzalans were discovered at a short distance in a canoe. "They spoke to them, but could make them understand nothing, except a few signs. Then Don Bartolomeo cried out, 'Quixan, Quixan, Padres, Capitan, Castilazine,' which means people from Castile, in order to make them understand whom he was looking for, and that they should carry the intelligence to them; but in consequence of not having an interpreter, nothing of what they spoke and answered was understood[1]."

On hearing the exclamations of Amezquita, the two Indians rowed away hastily, making loud vociferations, which led him to suppose they were going to Velasco and his party, whom he imagined to have reached the Peten.

"Our people," continues Villagutierre, "then continued along the borders of the lake, in order to get directly opposite the island, to reconnoitre it the better, when they came to another creek, which they could not

[1] Villagutierre, lib. vi. cap. 8.

cross, as it was very deep; they were obliged to go round it, opening a road through the foot of a mountain. They had come upon several footpaths, all leading to the lake, and everywhere covered with marks of horses' shoes, and they observed that they all showed the beasts had gone into the water, but there were no signs of their having come out again." At another creek yet further on the Spaniards saw many canoes, with some Indians on shore, to whom they beckoned, trying to make their wishes understood. Failing to do so, General Amezquita wrote on a slip of paper to Velasco, telling him that he had arrived with a number of troops, and was followed by many more, who were quartered a short distance off, and that a large force was coming on from Guatemala, and begged him to let him know what was going on in the island. A soldier tied this paper to a sweetmeat, and threw it across the creek. The Itzalans caught it, and one of them, showing both the sweetmeat and the paper in his hands, folded the latter in some leaves, and made signs that he was going to carry it to the island, at which the Spaniards made signs of approval, and he embarked immediately.

"The object of this paper was not only that Captain Juan Diaz should receive it, if he were on the island, but also that the Ajao, king, or chief cacique, should see it, for he knew the Castilian language, and could read and write; moreover, Quixan had told them that there was a white man in the Peten, very like Sergeant Roderigo Perez, who had come from a foreign land and he had married there, that he had two sons, and that was in the habit of reading a book very like one the Friars had, called the Daily Manual. Hopes were entertained that this foreigner might turn out a Spaniard,

and that he and one of the chiefs would read the paper, and that it might serve to intimidate the Itzalans."

When the messenger had departed, the Indians who remained became less shy, and some of them crossed over the creek to the Spaniards. One of them presented two very large turtles and some fish to Amezquita, who gave him in return *tassajo*, biscuit, and a knife, upon which the Indian embraced him, kissing the General on the neck, and repeatedly exclaiming, "Utz pusical, utz pusical" (I have a good heart). Another Indian then brought a large pumpkin and a large fish, and his companions became very urgent for the Spaniards to go with them to the Great Peten, saying, "Ajao, Ajao," and pointing to it and to their canoes. The Spaniards now repeated the words which the General had used, and at length they elicited the word "Cuman," more than once repeated, which Amezquita had heard before, but could not then recollect its meaning. He afterwards found that it signified a palisade.

But while thus engaged in attempting to make the Itzalans understand them, the Spaniards were not unmindful of their comrades, whose attention, if they were on the island and alive, they sought to attract by constantly beating their drums and blowing their trumpets: to no purpose, however, for no similar sounds were heard in reply; neither did the Indian messenger re-appear with any answer to the paper written by Amezquita. Still the Itzalans kept urging the soldiers to embark in their canoes; but the General refused to allow a single man to do so, feeling persuaded that their object was to drown the Spaniards when they got them upon the lake, a suspicion founded upon a precedent in the case of some Franciscan Friars on a former occasion elsewhere. Amez-

quita began also to entertain the idea that it was perhaps in this manner the party of Velasco had been made away with, and the conjecture appears a very probable one. He was confirmed in his suspicions of foul play by receiving no intelligence from the island, and became lost in perplexity as to what steps should now be taken, for, in addition to his anxiety respecting the fate of Velasco and his men, he had to consider the dangerous position of those whom he had brought with him. To advance in an enemy's country without supplies, and with so small a force, was out of the question; to remain was equally hazardous; to cross over to the island was an impossibility, having no means of constructing rafts for the passage. With deep grief, therefore, after having waited on the shores of the lake from eleven in the morning till six in the evening, without obtaining any tidings of Velasco's party, he found himself compelled to relinquish the hope of rescuing them; and giving them up for dead he passed the word for returning to the entrenchment at the Chaxál. As a last experiment he caused all the bugles to sound; innumerable canoes came off from the island, but evidently with only a hostile intention, and slowly and sadly the Spaniards turned their faces to the south, and commenced their retreat.

When Amezquita mustered his forces at the Chaxál, now greatly diminished from what they had been at Mopan, he felt convinced that his position was not tenable with such formidable and numerous enemies in front of him as occupied the islands of the lake. This was not merely matter of opinion, for while encamped on the river, the Itzalans came out in great force and repeatedly attacked him by night, till at length, defence being no longer possible, he evacuated the entrenchment, and

made good his retreat to the Savannah of San Pedro Martyr, where he proposed to construct a fort and wait the course of events. He wrote an account of all that had happened to the Vice-President Escals, and a similar communication was also made by Father Augustin Cano, with such statements in addition of the danger of continuing to occupy a place so remote as San Pedro,—the distance being sixty leagues from Vera Paz, and only thirty-two from the Lake of Itza,—that Don Gabriel Sanchez de Berospe, who had in the meanwhile arrived as President at Guatemala, thought it advisable to issue orders for the complete withdrawal of the troops, not only from the country of the Itzaex, but also from Mopan. And as, at the same time, the President learnt of the failure of Alçayaga in Lacandon, he too received instructions to return to Guatemala; and the summer of the year 1696 witnessed the abandonment of all the expeditions from the south.

CHAPTER XVIII.

APPOINTMENT OF URSUA AS INTERIM GOVERNOR OF YUCATAN.—HE BEGINS TO CONSTRUCT THE GREAT MILITARY ROAD.—ITS OPENING ENTRUSTED TO PAREDES, WHO CLEARS THE GROUND BEYOND THE LAKE OF CHUTUNQUI.—NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE CANEK OF ITZA.—PACIFIC ASSURANCES OF THE CANEK.—URSUA'S LETTER.—AN EMBASSY SENT FROM TAYASAL.—ITS RECEPTION AT MERIDA.—THE AMBASSADOR AFTER BEING BAPTIZED RETURNS TO THE GREAT PETEN.—ORDERS SENT TO PAREDES TO OCCUPY ITZA.—VISIT OF THE MISSIONARIES TO TAYASAL.—DOUBTFUL WELCOME.—THEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT.—REMARKABLE SPEECH OF THE CACIQUE CABOXH.—FATHER AVENDAÑO'S INTREPIDITY.—THE CANEK OFFERS ANEW TO SUBJECT HIS COUNTRY TO SPAIN.—AVENDAÑO'S CIRCULAR LETTER.—THE MISSIONARIES LEAVE TAYASAL, ARE LOST IN THE MOUNTAINS, BUT EVENTUALLY RESCUED.—REPORT OF THE MISSIONARIES.

WHILE the attempts were being made which have just been narrated, Don Martin de Ursua was no less actively employed on the side of Yucatan.

It has been shown that the proposition for connecting the two provinces by means of a high road from Merida to Santiago de Guatemala originated with Ursua; and it fortunately fell to his lot to carry it into execution.

Previous to the commencement of the general undertaking, the President of Guatemala had written to Don Roque de Soberanis, the Governor of Yucatan, requesting his co-operation, which the latter very readily promised as soon as he was freed from certain embarrass-

ments which clogged his free agency. The difficulty of Soberanis arose from various causes: in the first instance, from a dispute which had arisen between himself and the Bishop of Yucatan on points of jurisdiction, the result of which was that the Bishop had placed him under ecclesiastical censure, and during his continuance he was unable to attend, as he desired, to the affairs of the province; and, in the second place, from the proceedings of some of the citizens of Merida, who were discontented with the acts of his government, and had brought a lawsuit against him before the Royal Audiencia of Mexico. The complaints of the citizens having been laid before the Viceroy of New Spain, one of the Ministers of the Audiencia was appointed to examine into them, and his decision was so unfavourable to Soberanis, that he gave a sentence depriving him of the government of Yucatan. Against this decision Soberanis appealed to the higher tribunals of Mexico; but to make his appeal effectual it was necessary he should appear in person, and for this purpose he left Merida for the capital of New Spain, the Viceroy appointing Don Martin de Ursua to act as interim Governor of Yucatan during the absence of Soberanis.

The moment Ursua was installed in office he addressed himself to the subject which had so long occupied his thoughts, and, that no time might be lost, began to take such measures as were necessary to enforce the success of the enterprise. His first care was to collect a force of fifty Spaniards and a great number of Indian pioneers, and to purchase a large quantity of provisions, ammunition, and stores; his next object was to place the men whom he had raised under an efficient commander, and he made choice of Alonso Garcia de Pa-

redes, the Regidor of Campeachy, and captain of the district of Sabachan. Paredes was a man of courage and enterprise, but his first attempt was unsuccessful. He set out from Sacabchen, and when he had reached the frontier, where the old road terminated, proceeded to reconnoitre the mountains before he began the new one. He here fell in with a numerous party of Quecheaches, whom he could not restrain from attacking him; a sharp encounter accordingly took place, and, though the Indians were defeated, and several of them made prisoners, the soldiers of Paredes became disheartened at this unexpected opposition, and, sorely against his will, he decided on returning to Campeachy, and carried his purpose into execution at once.

It was with great dissatisfaction that Ursua learnt the step which Paredes had taken; but believing that his failure arose from the want of a sufficient force, and that personally he was not to blame, he resolved to continue him in the command, and strengthen the expeditionary army by all the reinforcements he could obtain. Voluntary assistance came from all quarters, the number of troops was greatly augmented; they were well supplied with necessaries, and in the beginning of June, 1695, the second expedition set out. Paredes pursued his march in good order through the populated districts of Yucatan, and arrived on the 11th of June at Chavich, "the boundary and frontier of Christianity in that direction." The pioneers now led the way, making a passage for the army to advance, and, except the obstacles which the country itself offered, nothing impeded their progress, not a single Indian being encountered between Chavich and Zucthoc, a place which they did not reach till the middle of July. In the neighbourhood of Zucthoc,

however, several of the natives were captured, and the zeal of the missionaries who accompanied the expedition prompting them to attempt the immediate conversion of the Infidels, who now flocked to the camp, Paredes made a halt of four-and-twenty days, being additionally induced to do so by the fact that his pioneers, from the increased difficulty of the ground, were unable to open the road so fast as they had previously done.

During the pause which Paredes made in this place he received fresh instructions, together with more soldiers, from Ursua, who, since the departure of the expedition, had heard of the return of the President Jacinto de Barrios to Guatemala, with his object unaccomplished. These new instructions were to the effect that Paredes should now make his way to the town of Los Dolores, but not proceed beyond it; and that, when he had arrived there, after erecting a fort, which was to bear the name of "Our Lady of Los Remedios," —the Virgin, under that designation, being the protectress of the enterprise,—he was to endeavour to subjugate the Itzaex by conversion.

Obedient to these orders, Paredes resumed his march on the 10th of August, and advanced upon Bateab, where the heavy rains detained him for nearly a fortnight. After crossing the river Ucum (the Concepcion) the next place of any note that was reached was Chutunqui, but, like so many sites that were discovered, the town was entirely deserted. Beyond this point the road was opened for a distance of seventeen leagues; but the heavy rains which flooded the country made it impossible for Paredes to bring up his provisions, and he felt himself under the necessity of falling back with his troops to the north of Zucthoc, until the dry season,

leaving the missionaries behind at the places which he had occupied. According to the statement of Zecera, the engineer of the expedition, the extent of new road already opened, when the second retreat took place, was not less than eighty-six leagues, and, from the accounts given by the Quecheache Indians, the termination was only a few leagues distant from the Lake of Itza, and within twenty or four-and-twenty leagues of Los Dolores.

At this juncture, the trial of Don Roque de Soberanis having terminated in his favour, a dispute immediately arose between him and Ursua respecting the completion of the road. It was referred to the Viceroy of Mexico, who reserved his decision until he had fuller information on the subject; and pending its delivery, Soberanis being still detained in Mexico to terminate his suit with the Bishop of Yucatan, Ursua continued in the direction of affairs.

At all times, as has already been frequently shown, pacification without force was the general object of the governors of Yucatan: hence the exertions of the Missionaries to convert the Indians, and the other efforts that were made to conciliate them. Thus, at this juncture, while the Franciscan monks were labouring in their vocation at Zucthoc and Bateab, negotiations were set on foot to come to a better understanding with the Canek of Itza.

The opportunity for making the attempt arose out of the voluntary submission of the Indians of Tipu, who addressed themselves in a body to Captain Francisco Hariza, the Alcalde of Salamanca de Bacalar, praying him to re-admit them to the Christian community. This he agreed to most readily, and, when once more brought into contact with the Tipuans, he learnt from them that

the Canek of Itza had recently expressed a strong desire to be on good terms with the Spaniards. Hariza resolved to improve the occasion, and selecting from among the newly-converted Tipuans a man of intelligence named Mateo Bichab, despatched him to the Canek with various presents, and a letter expressive of the earnest wish of the Governor of Yucatan to establish a friendly intercourse between the Spaniards and Itzaex, being well assured that Ursua would confirm the step he had taken.

As far as outward demonstration went, nothing could be more satisfactory than the conduct of the Canek. The reply which he made to the overtures of Hariza was as follows :—

"Tell the captain who sends thee that I will gladly receive him, and I promise to lay myself at his feet, with eighty thousand Indians whom I have at my command as my vassals and subjects ; all of whom, with myself, are ready to accept the water of baptism. Tell him besides not to deceive me for the purpose of taking my life, as I promise him four thousand Indians for his Governor in the city of Merida, my desire to see his King being great. Say to him also, that when he arrives at that town whence thou comest, he must send for me, and on receiving his letter I will go down to see him, to know if he bring peace ; but if he comes straight to my town, I will make war upon him. Let him know that the time has now arrived which was prophesied by the priests of old, that I urgently wish to see him, and that I proffer peace, being willing to render vassalage to the governor of that captain, as my ancestors came from the province of Mayapan[1]."

When Hariza received this answer, he forwarded it im-

[1] Villagutierre, lib. v. cap. 11.

mediately to Ursua, whom he had already informed of his proceedings; and Don Martin was so rejoiced at the intelligence, that he at once determined on sending an embassy to the Canek in his own name and that of the King of Spain, in order to influence him yet more strongly to carry out the intention he had expressed. The person whom Ursua chose as his ambassador was the Father Commissary Andrés de Avendaño, who was made the bearer of a very long letter from the Governor, in which he entered at great length into the mystery of the Christian faith, explaining who were its spiritual teachers, to whom was entrusted the duty of extending it throughout the world, and calling upon the Canek to fulfil the promises made by his ancestors to Cortes, to Figueroa, to Fuensalida, and others. Ursua's letter concluded in these words:—"And now I send thee a very handsome machete[1], with its sheath, and its broad belt, and three yards of scarlet silk stuff, that thou mayest wear them in my name. Written at this city of Tihoo, which is Merida, the 8th day of the month of December, in the year of the birth of Christ our Redeemer, of four twenties[2], which are counted for four four-hundred, with fifteen more."

Directions were given to Father Avendaño to proceed to Itza by way of Zucthoc, and, taking with him two other Franciscans and the usual retinue of the missionaries, he quitted Merida. But he had scarcely taken his departure before an intimation reached Ursua that an embassy had already set out from the Peten, headed by the nephew of the Canek, and that it was approaching

[1] A sort of long knife, chiefly used for hewing down underwood

[2] Ursua gives the year thus, probably as the only way in which the Canek could understand it, as the Itzaex reckoned by cycles of twenties. The year 1695 is intended.

through Tipu. On the receipt of this intelligence the Governor made preparations for receiving the embassy in a manner proportionate to the importance which he attached to it; and as soon as he heard of the Canek's nephew being at hand, he went out to meet him on the road, accompanied by the civil and military authorities, and all the principal inhabitants of Merida. Ursua encountered the ambassador and his attendants at the convent of Mejoxada, a short distance outside the city walls, where mutual salutations took place between him and the Itzalan chief; the latter was then conducted to the Governor's carriage, and was driven back with him to the cathedral of Merida, the other Indians following in charge of the officials.

After a mass had been performed, the Governor carried the ambassador to his own residence, the royal palace, where, in the presence of all the suite and the ecclesiastical authorities, the Itzalan chief produced a crown of feathers of divers colours, which he had brought with him, shaped like a tiara, and presented it to Ursua with the following speech:—

"Señor, I come as the representative of my uncle, the great Canek, King and absolute Lord of the Itzaex, in his name and on his behalf to prostrate myself at thy feet and to offer his royal crown, in order that thou mayest receive us in the name of thy great King, whose representative thou art, and admit us into his royal service, and place us under his care and protection, and grant us priests to baptize us, and administer the sacraments, and teach us the law of the true God. This is the object of my visit, and the desire of my King and that of his subjects[1]."

[1] Villagutierre, lib. vi. cap. 2.

The Governor took the crown, and through the interpreter replied that he received him right willingly under the care and protection of the King of Spain, and promised him and his followers the rites of baptism; he then embraced them all, and they were afterwards handsomely feasted, with great demonstrations of cordiality.

On the following day the ambassador, and the Itzaex who accompanied him, were urgent in their demand for baptism and for permission to see the city; the last request was at once acceded to, and they were taken through Merida, the most notable thing in their behaviour being that nothing seemed to cause them any surprise, though all the objects which they beheld were so entirely new to them; but the *nil admirari* appears always to have been a feature in the Indian character.

Ursua was anxious to fathom the motives of the Canek in sending this embassy, and questioned the Itzalan chief very closely on the subject, as well as on matters pertaining to himself and his country. The ambassador, who said that his name was Cán, repeated the statement he had already made, adding that his uncle, the Canek, was desirous of "drinking the same water and living under the same roof" with the Spaniards, because the determined time when they should exchange their creed for that of the Christians had passed; that previously to sending the embassy, the Canek had consulted the four kings who were his tributaries, as well as his principal councillors and chief people, and all had unanimously approved the measure, and made preparation for coming to Merida to be baptized. The ambassador also gave a description of the produce of his country, and entered into various details of more or less interest to his hearer, concluding by a repetition of his desire for baptism.

Thus urgently entreated, the ceremony was no longer delayed. Villagutierre thus describes the manner of it, with what followed.

"The name of Don Martin Francisco Cán was given to the ambassador; his godfather was Don Martin de Ursua. Count de Miraflores stood sponsor to his brother, Don Miguel Cán; another was baptized Don Manuel José Chaioxs; and the other Itzalan, and two Muçules (who completed the embassy) were baptized in their turn. The holy sacrament of baptism was administered in the cathedral. On their way there and back to Governor Ursua's house they were attended by a numerous and brilliant *cortége*, accompanied by all the pomp that could be imagined. The Governor dressed them all splendidly, according to their rank, and then gave them presents in a very courteous manner; and now the ambassador being convalescent from a slight indisposition by which he had been affected, the Governor gave him letters and a handsome present for his uncle, the Canek, explaining what he wished to have said on his behalf, and then took leave of him and his companions with great show of friendship and kindness. He sent a large retinue to accompany them to the first town, thence thirty men-at-arms and Captain Francisco de Hariza were to form their escort; four ecclesiastics were to be left in Tipu, and seven others, granted by the Chapter of Merida, were to proceed with Don Martin Cán and his suite to the great Cayo of the lake of the Itzaex, or, if necessary, to the Great Peten[1]."

As soon as he had thus honourably dismissed the ambassador, the Governor sent an order to his Lieutenant, Paredes, at Zucthoc, informing him of all that had oc-

[1] Villagutierre, lib. vi. cap. 4.

cured, and desiring him to desist from any further attempt to open the road, but, instead of that work, to proceed and take possession of the country of the Itzaex in the name of the King of Spain. At the same time, as Ursua was ignorant of the distance between Zucthoc and the Peten, and uncertain how long it might take Paredes to reach it, he forwarded similar instructions to Hariza with a copy of those he had sent to Paredes, that whichever arrived first might carry them into execution.

In the interim, however, it is necessary that the result which attended the embassy from Merida, under Avendaño, should be related.

After an interview with Paredes at Zucthoc, Avendaño and his companions set out for Tayasal, and for six days travelled across a very intricate country, until they reached a town called Chaban, where their reception was not in the first instance of the most agreeable kind; but the inhabitants were soon reconciled to their presence, and not only treated the Fathers with hospitality, but escorted them to a town called Nichen, on the brink of the Lake of Itza, a distance of about four leagues. Having previously despatched an Indian messenger to announce their arrival, they were visited within two hours of reaching Nichen by the Canek in person, accompanied by four hundred Itzaex, who came in a great many canoes. They were all painted black, in their war costume, and were provided with large baskets full of arrows, which however were left lying at the bottom of the boats. Much courtesy did not attend the meeting, on the part of the Itzaex, who somewhat unceremoniously embarked the clerical embassy, and conveyed them to Tayasal. On arriving at the Great Peten they landed, and went to the palace of the Canek. On entering it,

the first thing they saw was the table on which the sacrifices took place; it consisted of a large stone upwards of two yards and a half long and a yard and a half wide, with twelve seats round it, for the priests who officiated. It was not an omen of good augury, neither was the impatience shown by the multitudes of people who were assembled; but Father Avendaño put the best face he could on the doubtful position in which he felt himself placed, and, having obtained the Canek's permission, read to the crowd the letter which he had brought from the Governor of Yucatan, and followed it up by a spiritual lecture, calling upon the Itzaex to bring their children to be baptized. The appeal had its effect, and during the next and the several succeeding days, while Avendaño was waiting for the answer to the embassy, no less than three hundred baptisms took place.

But these baptisms, and this avowed readiness to adopt Christianity, seem to have been, for the most part, a mere craving after novelty; or, if a few were in earnest in the desire to adopt a better faith than the barbarous idolatry they followed, the priests, the leaders of the people, and the general mass were wholly opposed to the projected conversion of their nation. The most formidable opponent to the scheme was a cacique named Coboxh, who condescended however to argue with Father Avendaño, demanding of him the reason why he had determined upon coming to Tayasal. The Father Commissary replied by showing him, after the computation of the Itzaex, that the period had arrived for the fulfilment of the ancient prophecies, and directed his attention to certain characters and figures which were painted on flexible pieces of wood, called Analtecs, which the Indians used as calendars, and which confirmed his

reckoning. Coboxh, unable to refute Avendaño's argument, retorted hastily: "And what signifies it if the time *be* come? the sharp flint that points my lance is not yet worn away;" and, uttering these words, he significantly raised his weapon. Avendaño replied to him with the greatest calmness, that God alone, who had sent him there, could give the cacique power to kill him, there being a time appointed for all things. "If thou," he said, "who talkest in this manner, hadst been able, thou wouldst already have executed thy threat upon me, conjointly with the devil Pacoc, whom thou adorest, and who instils these ideas into thee. Thereby thou seest that in my presence he has no power, since he only dares to prompt you, but does not dare to come and carry his prompting into effect."

Avendaño's intrepidity, if not his logic, had the effect of preventing personal violence, but he received little more than fair words in reply to Ursua's letter, instead of the active demonstration which the Canek had originally promised; but, considering the inconstant nature of these Indians, it was something to leave the place unscathed. The Canek expressed his great willingness to become a Christian, and live on terms of amity with the Spaniards; in corroboration of which assertion, he gave Avendaño two feather-crowns and a fan in return for the presents sent him, expressed fears of his own respecting the rivalry of the Cacique Coboxh, offered anew the surrender of the Petenes, and asked the Father Commissary to return and visit him at the end of four months. This Avendaño promised to do, and, to calm the minds of the Itzaex and remove the apprehension they entertained of the Spaniards making war upon them, he left with the Canek a written paper, telling him

he would distribute copies of it everywhere amongst his countrymen, the contents of which were as follows:—

"Gentlemen Captains, belonging to either Pole, North or South: Dear Sirs.—Our Lord has been pleased to give us his Divine Grace, to enable us to accomplish what has not been done in many ages; but nothing is impossible to the Divine power. With it, he has made this invincible Itzalan nation bow down its head and humble itself at the first effort of the Evangelical ministers and sons of our Seraphic Father Saint Francis, and bring their children to the pure washing of baptism; having up to this hour baptized many, and hoping to a certainty baptize the whole shortly. But although their fathers and mothers are friendly and well disposed towards us, they are still very slow in renouncing their idolatry. To succeed in making them do so, it will be necessary to use them kindly, to have a great deal of patience, and put up with many troublesome and disagreeable acts, the result of the dark ignorance they have lived in. Wherefore I beg of you all to behave with great forbearance if you should reach this nation of the Itzaex, whose patron is St. Paul, in order not to lose in a short time what has been so long sought, and, thanks be to God, obtained. They are instructed on your arrival to receive you in a friendly manner, and to supply you with necessary provisions, in exchange for axes and hatchets and other goods from Castile, which they ardently long for; but," concludes Avendaño, with commendable caution, "I know not if they will pay well for them."

After writing this letter the Father Commissary and his companions took leave of the Canek, who gave them for a short distance the escort of his son and son-in-law

as a protection; but after the Itzaex had left them they lost their way amongst the mountains, and wandered about for nearly a month, being at last reduced to such sore extremity, the fruits and herbs which they found being their only sustenance, that they nearly died of famine and fatigue. Providentially however the Yucatan Indians, who had accompanied the embassy, succeeded at last in falling in with some muleteers, who were carrying provisions to the camp of Paredes, and the Franciscans, nearly at their last gasp, were saved and safely carried to Zucthoc. From thence, when they had sufficiently recovered, they proceeded in safety to Merida, and gave the Governor a full account of what had befallen them since their departure, together with the result of their observations and what they had learnt from the inhabitants of Tayasal.

The sum and substance of this information was to the following effect.

That, as well as they could ascertain, the number of people living on the Great Peten and the four smaller islands amounted to about five-and-twenty thousand of all ages and sexes, but the Itzalan population surrounding the lake was infinitely greater, and could not be calculated. That to reach the Petenes no reliance could be placed on any native means of transport, but that a Spanish force once arrived on the borders of the lake must construct their own vessels. The Great Peten, or city of Tayasal, contained, they said, nineteen temples for idol-worship, four of which they had themselves seen; these buildings were low, but built with great solidity, and were thatched in the same manner as the churches of Yucatan. The dress of the natives consisted of a sort of sack without sleeves, of cotton woven with various

colours, and their cloaks, or mantas, were also variegated and of the same material. They were well limbed, and of a clearer colour than the Indians of Yucatan; many had their faces marked with stripes, and their ears and noses bored; in the former they had rings, and in the latter they used to wear vanilla. The soil was very rich and fertile, and, they added, some of the rings which they wore were of silver and others of gold, which led them to believe that there must be mines of those metals in that country. In answer to the questions of Ursua as to whether any mention had been made of the embassy of Don Martin Cán, the Fathers said that neither the Canek nor any of the people of Itza had even spoken of the embassy, nor had they heard of it themselves in any shape till informed of the fact at the camp of Paredes.

CHAPTER XIX.

MILITARY EXPEDITION TO THE LAKE OF ITZA.—ZUBIAUR APPOINTED TO THE COMMAND.—HE REACHES THE LAKE, AND MEETS WITH A HOSTILE RECEPTION.—A BATTLE FOUGHT.—DIFFICULTIES IN COMPLETING THE GREAT ROAD.—DOUBTS ENTERTAINED OF THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE ITZALAN EMBASSY.—ITS TRUTH ESTABLISHED AT THE EXPENSE OF THE CANEK'S REPUTATION.—THE FATE OF VELASCO'S PARTY ASCERTAINED.—ROYAL CEDULA EXTENDING THE AUTHORITY OF URSUA.—HE SETS OUT IN PERSON FROM CAMPEACHY, AND REACHES THE GREAT LAKE.—A FLAG OF TRUCE FROM THE ITZAEX.—INTERVIEW BETWEEN URSUA AND THE HIGH PRIEST QUINCANEK.—A COUNCIL OF WAR, AND PREPARATIONS MADE FOR CROSSING OVER TO TAYASAL.

It was after the departure of the Franciscans on their embassy to Itza, that Paredes received his instructions from Don Martin de Ursua to advance upon that place, and take possession of the country in the name of the King of Spain. Being an invalid at the time, and unable to carry them out in person, he gave the command of the expedition to Pedro de Zubiaur, who took with him sixty men-at-arms, some more Indians and other servants, Father Juan de San Buenaventura, and a lay brother who accompanied him. The troops left the camp at Zucthoc during the time that Avendaño and his companions were wandering about the mountains on their return from Tayasal, and performed their march

to the lake without difficulty. As they relied upon a friendly reception, no apprehension was felt at the appearance of vast numbers of armed Itzaex, who, on the approach of the Spaniards, rowed swiftly over from the Great Peten and landed on the shore. But Zubiaur was speedily undeceived, for the Itzaex first seized upon some of the Indians who were carrying the provisions, and on the expostulation of Father Buenaventura, who explained to them the reason of their coming, they seized him too, together with the lay brother and another Spaniard, and hurrying them prisoners into a canoe, rowed off with them so swiftly that it was impossible to rescue them. Nor did the Itzaex stop here, but, without any provocation given, laid hold of two Indian carriers and beat them to death with their clubs. They also seized a Spanish soldier, and cut his throat before the eyes of his countrymen. It was time therefore for Zubiaur to assume an attitude of defence; but scarcely had he done so before his men were assailed with showers of arrows, as well from the Itzaex on the lake as from those who had gathered on the shore, who numbered altogether more than ten thousand. The battle then began in earnest, and the first discharge of musketry brought down full forty of the enemy; but Zubiaur, perceiving that it would be vain to contend against such a vast disparity of numbers, gradually withdrew his men and retreated into the mountains, making the best of his way back to the camp, from whence information of what had taken place was forwarded to Ursua.

On the eastern side of the province the expedition ordered to proceed under Hariza had, in the meantime, been stationary, in consequence of intelligence having been received at Tipu, first, of the sailing of Avendaño's

embassy, and secondly, of the result of the skirmish under Zubiaur; so that the attempted pacification of the Itzaex remained for the present unaccomplished. Something, however, had been done towards laying the foundation for subjugating the country, and this was the completion by the force of Paredes, of upwards of a hundred and ten leagues of road from Merida, on which herds of cattle and muleteers could now pass without let or hindrance, leaving only a distance of about eight leagues still unexplored to the north of Nuestra Señora de los Dolores. This was, however, the most difficult part of the enterprise, as its course lay through an enemy's country, and could scarcely be carried on with safety until the reduction of the Itzaex was effected.

There were also other difficulties arising out of the divided authority between Don Roque de Soberanis and Ursua; the former, who about this time returned to his government, being solicitous of the honour of completing the much-desired highway, though all the labours hitherto performed had been made at the cost and by the direction of Ursua. The question was strenuously urged by the principals on both sides and by their respective friends; but, after more than one conflicting decision, it was determined by the Bishop of Mechoacan, *ad-interim* Viceroy of Mexico, that the task of finishing the road should be confided to Ursua, who began it, and that Soberanis should give him every assistance in his power.

Most unwillingly was this assistance rendered, and not until every kind of reclamation had been made, and recourse had even to the subornation of hostile testimony, to convict Ursua of mismanagement in the construction of the road, and of credulity in giving implicit belief to

the ambassador of the Canek of Itza, who, it was now affirmed, was no relation of the king, nor charged by him with any mission, but only a common Indian of Tipu, who had got up the embassy for his own advantage.

It will for a short time interrupt the course of Ursua's proceedings, to dispose of the last-named accusation against him; but as other circumstances of interest are connected with the explanation, the digression becomes necessary.

When the news first reached Tipu of the untoward events that had taken place on the borders of the Lake of Itza, Don Martin Cán, fearing danger to himself, fled with his companions, and whither they went no one knew. But one person remained behind, whose situation was no less precarious: this was one Pablo Gil, a native of Salamanca de Bacalar, who had been the first to inform Captain Francisco de Hariza of the alleged embassy, and was, to a certain extent, the guarantee of its authenticity. The flight of Martin Cán and the reports which became current, that the embassy was altogether a sham, combined to fix upon Pablo Gil the odium of having abetted a falsehood which involved very serious consequences, and Hariza, who had been the first upon whom the deceit—if it were one—was practised, immediately caused him to be arrested, and thrown into prison. During his confinement he underwent very close examinations, but he resolutely persisted in his original statement that the embassy was what he had represented it to be, though, in the absence of Martin Cán and his companions, he could adduce no proof that it was so. Fortunately however for the prisoner, when his incarceration had lasted five months there came to the town of Salamanca de Bacalar, entirely of their own accord, a

party of four Indians of a nation bordering on the great Lake of Itza, and about a day's journey from it. These Indians were appealed to, to ascertain whether the story of Pablo Gil were true or false, and their answers completely exonerated him. They stated that they knew the Indian Cán, and that he was the nephew of the Canek, who had despatched him on a mission, the nature of which they were ignorant of; but they had learnt that a mutiny had broken out amongst the Itzaex at Tayasal, when the people became aware that Cán had been sent to Yucatan, and that, to appease the rebels, the Canek had subsequently ignored the embassy, and refused to allow his nephew to return.

But the information given by these people went further; and what they related removed all doubt respecting the fate of Juan Diaz de Velasco and his party, of whom all trace had been lost after they reached the southern shore of the Lake of Itza. The account they gave was, that fifteen Spaniards had arrived at the lake, where their first demand was for provisions, which the Cayo Indians (as they termed them on that side) brought them. While the Spaniards were at their meal the noise of fire-arms was heard at a distance, and fancying that a party of their countrymen had followed them, and were engaged in a skirmish, they hastily seized their arms, and prepared to join them,—never thinking that the shots which were fired had been meant as a signal only. The Cayo Indians, observing the movement, put their own interpretation upon it, and immediately fell upon and slew the Spaniards, though the Canek, who was himself present, did his utmost to prevent the deed. In proof of the truth of this story, the Indians said that the Canek was wounded in the affray, and bore upon his

neck the marks of a blow inflicted by one of the Spaniards. Such was the tale now told, and—saving the incident of the Canek's interference—it is probably the true account of what befell Velasco and his men.

At the conclusion of their statements, these Indians, who declared themselves the constant enemies of the Itzaex, volunteered their services to aid in the subjugation of the latter, offering to procure provisions, and construct a certain number of vessels, and otherwise assist any further expeditionary force, indicating at the same time the safest and most convenient spot for a rendezvous.

We now return to Ursua. That which had most effect in causing Don Roque de Soberanis to assist his rival was the receipt of a Royal Cedula from Spain, highly commending Ursua for all that he had done, and enjoining Soberanis not to embarrass his efforts under any pretext whatever. A second Cedula to the same effect was addressed to the Governor, in terms neither to be misunderstood nor disobeyed. Both were dated from the Buen Retiro, on the 29th of May, 1696; and a private letter accompanied them, addressed to Ursua by Count Adanero, then Governor of the Council of the Indies, reiterating the kind expressions employed by the King. In consequence of these orders Soberanis now placed everything that was necessary at the disposal of Ursua, who at once made his arrangements for conducting the enterprise in person, retaining Paredes, Estenoz, Zubiaur, and Gutierrez, four captains on whom he relied, as his chief assistants.

His preparations being completed, and a much larger force collected than had ever been under arms for this purpose before, Ursua sent forward his infantry, artillery,

baggage, provisions, etc., under Zubiaur, with instructions, after leaving Zucthoc, to take the same route as that by which he had previously marched, and halt in the mountains two leagues from the lake, till Ursua himself arrived with the remainder of the army.

These orders were punctually obeyed; and, on the 24th of January, 1697, Ursua followed from Campeachy, which town had been his head-quarters during the formation of the armament, with the cavalry of the expedition, the staff, the vicar-general and ecclesiastics who had been named for Itza by the bishop, the royal standard, and all the necessary appurtenances for the march. He came up with the first division of his force at Bateab, and shortly afterwards reached the borders of the lake, where the first operation performed was that of cutting down the trees required for building the vessels, in which he proposed to cross over to Tayasal. He was a good deal harassed by the Itzaex during the progress of this work, but he would not permit of any hostile demonstration against them, trusting to effect their reduction without bloodshed; and to such as came to the camp he gave presents of various kinds, hoping by this means to convince them that his intentions were pacific. Amongst the latter, one day, Ursua was greatly pleased to recognize Don Martin Cán, who, since the report made by the four Indians at Salamanca de Bacalar, had returned to Tayasal; he admitted him to his own tent, and there, in the presence of witnesses, received a solemn deposition from the Itzálan chief, to the effect that every particular in connection with the embassy to Merida was perfectly true, and the cause of his sudden departure from Tipu arose from the fear he entertained that the consequences of the skirmish with the troops of Zubiaur would be

visited on his head; of Father Buenaventura and his companions he could give no account. He reported also that the Itzaex were all for war, and had constructed several strong works of defence, with many other less important particulars.

The Itzalan had scarcely furnished his narration before a sudden call to arms was made, in consequence of the approach of a body of Indians from the lake. They proved however to be of the Alain tribe, who professed themselves friendly to the Spaniards, and were headed by their Cacique Chamaxculu and other Indians, some of whom had already been baptized in Merida. Ursua gave them a warm welcome, with every appearance of the amicable purpose for which he had entered Itza, and dismissed them with many presents. Hardly had they retired before a fresh squadron of canoes was seen approaching from the Great Peten, and, by the white flag which one of them carried, Don Martin Cán recognized the presence of the high-priest Quincanek, the eldest first-cousin of the king, and next to him in authority. He came accompanied by another chief, called Kitcán, and, anxious to conciliate such important personages, Ursua gave them a brilliant reception, the troops being drawn up, and the music playing as they landed, and were escorted to his tent.

Quincanek opened the interview by declaring, through the interpreters, that his heart was greatly rejoiced at the kindness which the Itzäex had always experienced from the Spanish commander; and Ursua replied, that if a similar disposition prevailed on their part, no hostile proceedings would arise from his visit, but if he were provoked to war the heaviest chastisement would befall them. Quincanek returned that he wanted only peace,

and was ready to keep it; and, having spoken about the Guatemala road, said, pointing to the south, that it went in that direction as far as the sea, on the other side of the lake. The General then told him that it would be advantageous that the Itzaex should open a road round the lake to join that of Guatemala, and Quincanek at once promised that it should be done, Ursua agreeing to pay the Indians for their labour. Before he parted from the high-priest, the General obtained from him a confirmation of the statement of Don Martin Cán respecting the embassy, and having bestowed upon himself and his followers a number of the usual presents, he urged him, on taking leave, to request the Canek to visit the Spanish camp in the same friendly manner. The Quincanek undertook for his royal cousin that the visit should be paid on a certain day, and the Itzalans returned to Tayasal,—all but Don Martin, who willingly remained with the Spaniards.

But the period named by the high-priest went by, and the Canek never appeared, though in his stead there were numbers of Itzalan women, whose presumed object was to convert the camp of Ursua into another Capua. He prevented this by the strictness of his discipline, and, though well received, the fair Itzalanas were compelled to return to the Great Peten, with their purposes of conquest unaccomplished.

It now became necessary to hold a council of war, to decide upon what course should be adopted, for everything indicated that the Itzaex were not to be won over by fair words and kindness. Yet Ursua was still for endeavouring to pacificate the country without force, and strongly urged this view of the case in the speech which he made to the Council. The chief officers, Paredes,

Estenoz, Zubiaur, and the rest, were however of a different opinion, and advocated a war of extermination; but the General would not yield to their representations, and though he had made up his mind to embark for Tayasal,—the vessels being now ready,—he forthwith issued a proclamation to his troops, forbidding hostilities with the Indians under any pretext, on pain of death, unless a direct order from himself were issued on the subject.

CHAPTER XX.

EMBARKATION OF THE SPANISH TROOPS.—MIRACULOUS APPEARANCE OF THE PICTURE OF ST. PAUL.—URSUA'S PEACEABLE EDICT.—THE ITZAEX MUSTER ON THE LAKE, AND COMMENCE HOSTILITIES.—THE SPANIARDS REPEL THE ASSAULT, ATTACK THE HEIGHTS OF TAYASAL, AND CAPTURE THE CITY.—TAYASAL RE-BAPTIZED.—DESTRUCTION OF IDOLS AND TEMPLES.—FORMAL POSSESSION TAKEN IN THE NAME OF THE KING OF SPAIN.—DISCOVERY OF THE REMAINS OF VELASCO AND FATHER BUENAVENTURA.—THE FUGITIVE ITZAEX BEGIN TO RETURN TO TAYASAL.—CLEMENCY OF URSUA.—THE CANEK AND THE HIGH PRIEST BROUGHT INTO THE SPANISH CAMP.—GENERAL SUBMISSION OF THE ITZAEX.—THE CANEK AND QUINCANEK PLACED IN DURANCE, AND BROUGHT TO TRIAL.—AWFUL HURRICANE.—THE STORM EXORCISED.—RESULT OF THE TRIAL.—ACCOUNT OF TAYASAL AND DESCRIPTION OF THE CUSTOMS OF THE INHABITANTS.

HAVING published this edict, and every preparation having been made, the day had scarcely dawned, on the 13th of March, 1697, when General Ursua and his army confessed, and received the Sacrament. They then prayed to God for the success of the undertaking, mass was said by the Vicar-General, Don Juan Pacheco, the troops breakfasted, and, with the royal standard flying, marched down to the waterside, where the vessels were in readiness.

Before he embarked, Ursua harangued his men, and the Vicar-General blessed the galliot that was about to

convey him. "He had scarcely done so," says Villagutierre, "when an engraving, about six inches wide, was seen floating on the waves and coming towards the vessel; on taking it out of the water, it was given to General Ursua. It turned out to be the picture of the glorious Apostle St. Paul, and, in consequence of this miracle, the galliot was called after his name[1]."

The force which Ursua took with him consisted of 158 Spanish soldiers and 50 Indian servants, likewise armed, together with Don Martin Cán, the Vicar-General, and the Under-Vicar Francisco de Mora. He left behind in the camp, which was well fortified and provided with artillery, a garrison of 127 Spaniards, besides a number of war-Indians, pioneers and others, under the command of Juan Francisco Cortes, a soldier appropriately named to be, under such circumstances, on such a spot.

When the sun rose, the galliot was already on her way, steering direct for the Great Peten, and the Vicar-General, commanding silence, offered a *Salve* to Nuestra Señora de los Remedios, for the success of the expedition; and when the prayer was over, the soldiers raised a great cry: "Viva la ley de Dios! Viva la ley de Dios!" "Long live the law of God!" Ursua then ordered the edict, which had been published the evening before, to be read again. The drums and trumpets were ordered to sound, and the Vicar-General addressed the men:—"Señores," he said, "let all those who, at the bottom of their hearts, are sorry for having offended God, and would ask pardon for their sins, lift up their hands and say, 'Lord, I have sinned, have mercy upon me!'" When all, apparently, had performed this act,

[1] Villagutierre, lib. viii. cap. 8.

the Vicar-General, in a loud voice, went through the form of giving them absolution, and then with joy they continued their voyage.

About midway across the lake a sentinel canoe was seen making for the Great Peten, and shortly afterwards many more appeared from behind a promontory, drawn up in regular order. On nearing them, the Spaniards could perceive that the Indians who manned the canoes were full of confidence, as they made a great hue and cry, brandishing their weapons, and showing they were quite ready to fight. But without taking any notice, the galliot moved on through the midst of them, the rowers being ordered by the General not to slacken their speed till they came near the principal island, the buildings on which were now distinctly visible.

The further the expedition advanced, the greater became the concourse of canoes, till at length they formed a complete circle round the galliot, and when within bow-shot the Indians rose and discharged a cloud of arrows against her. This assault provoked no return, for Ursua, whose anxiety to prevent bloodshed was extreme, exclaimed in a loud voice, "Let no one fire,—God is on our side;" and though the Spaniards were galled by the insults of the enemy, they refrained at his command. The General then addressed the Itzaex in words of peace, but they, misinterpreting his motives and ascribing his forbearance to fear, replied by shouts of derision and renewed flights of arrows, which fell like a shower of rain. The canoes closed in more and more, till they drove the galliot close to the shore, thousands of darts flying on all sides, so that, says Villagutierre, "it was a continued miracle that the Spaniards were not all slain."

At length however more than one arrow reached its mark: a sergeant,.named Juan Gonzales, was wounded, and a soldier also, called Bartolomeo Duran. The latter, writhing with pain, forgot the edict, and discharged his musket; his example was followed by the rest: Ursua could restrain them no longer, and the battle then began. So eager now were the Spaniards for the fray, that they would not wait till the galliot had touched the shore, but shouting to the oarsmen to cease rowing, jumped into the water, which was up to their knees, and fought their way to the land. Arrived there they closed into a compact body, and then charged the Itzaex with such fury, that the ranks of the barbarians were utterly broken; a panic seized them: abandoning their defences they fled in the most precipitate manner, and, in the hope of escaping to the mainland, plunged into the lake, where vast numbers were either drowned or shot. Villagutierre gives a brief but striking picture of the scene that then presented itself:—

"The galliot, with twenty men-at-arms who had remained on board, previously selected for any emergency that might arise, gave them chase on the lake. Those in the canoes were seized with the same panic as those on shore: they threw away their arms and oars, abandoned their canoes, and took to the water, so that really nothing was to be seen on the lake, from the island to the main, but the heads of Indians, men, women, and boys, who were swimming as fast as they could."

Encountering no further obstacle on land, Ursua, with sword and shield, led on his troops to the height of Tayasal, and having reached the pinnacle of the Great Peten planted the standards of Castile, of "Nuestro Dulce Jesus, and of his most holy mother of Los Remedios"

on the summit of the loftiest temple of the Infidels. The General then, and all who accompanied him, fell on their knees and returned thanks to God for having, in a few short hours, enabled them to obtain so signal a victory.

Ursua's next proceeding was to baptize the city of Tayasal by the name of St. Paul (Nuestra Señora de los Remedios being given to the Peten), in consequence of the "miracle" which had wafted the picture of the Apostle across the lake: it was also in his recollection that the Franciscan Fathers, Juan de Orbita and Bartolomeo de Fuensalida, had, on their visit to the island, bestowed upon it the name of St. Paul, and appointed him its patron. The General then gave orders for the dispersion of the troops in different directions throughout the city, to destroy every altar and idol they could discover, as well in private dwellings as in the temples; and so great was their iconoclastic fury, and so vast the number of objects they found to wreak it on, that it was impossible to count the number of images that were either burnt or broken in pieces. "To give some idea," says the historian of the capture, "of the quantity of the idols and statues which were reduced to ashes, it will be sufficient to state that the Great Peten was taken at half-past eight in the morning, and that the work of destruction lasted till half-past five in the afternoon, when the retreat was sounded that the troops might get their dinner, which they stood much in need of, after such hard work[1]."

On the following day Ursua assembled the troops, and the royal standard having been removed from the Teocali, where it had been fixed the day before, he took it in his hand, and made the following speech:—

[1] Villagutierre, lib. viii. cap. 9.

"Señores.—Though His Majesty (whom God preserve) is absolute King, lord, and master of this island of Nuestra Señora de los Remedios, of San Pablo of Itza, and of the other adjacent towns, lakes, and territories; notwithstanding, I take, in the name of His Majesty Don Carlos the Second, real and actual possession of all the lands and cities that have been under the sway of the Canek of the Itzaex, who has abandoned them through his great and enormous crimes, without any harm having been hitherto done to him."

This allocution ended, he returned the standard to the officer who had brought it, and it was replaced on the summit of the Teocali, from whence it was visible all over the lake.

The Vicar-General then congratulated Ursua on the victory he had won, and demanded, in the name of the Bishop of Yucatan, that he should grant him the power of instructing the Infidels of those lands in the doctrines of the Christian faith; and this request having been complied with, the vicar, arrayed in full canonicals, bestowed his blessing on the water employed to purify the temple, which was converted into a church, and consecrated to our Lady of Succour. Mass was then celebrated with the offices of the day, in the presence of the General and his troops.

These ceremonies over, Ursua despatched Captain Zubiaur with a party of soldiers to the mainland, on that side of the lake where he supposed they might find the traces of the Guatemala road. After a brief absence Zubiaur returned, and announced, not only that the road had been discovered, as the marks of horses' hoofs were still visible, but that he had likewise found the skeletons of Diaz de Velasco and his party, their skulls knocked to

pieces, and bearing frightful testimony to the manner of their deaths. He added, that his men had also found, in a small island on the lake, the bones of Father Buenaventura and of the lay-brother his companion, whom the Itzaex had made prisoners when Zubiaur first reached the lake. He said he was satisfied with the identity of the last-named remains because of a tassel being discovered near them, which had belonged to Buenaventura, and in corroboration he presented it to the General. In consequence of this report Ursua sent off the galliot to collect the remains of the murdered soldiers, which were buried with great solemnity in the new church; those of the Franciscans were also brought away, and were subsequently conveyed to Yucatan, and delivered for interment to the Father Provincial of St. Francis.

Ursua's next care was to garrison the defences of the island, in case of a sudden attack from the expelled Indians; but fear of the Spaniards seemed to have wholly paralysed them, for no such attempt was made. At the expiration however of three or four days, some of the fugitives began to return, timidly, and in small parties, and proffering complete submission. Ursua met them with kind words and good treatment: he ordered that the women, especially, should be treated with decency and honour, that the houses and goods of the people should be restored to them, and proclaimed the severest penalties against any of his troops who should do them injury and wrong. These measures were of great use, for when it was known that no punishment or molestation awaited them, great numbers came flocking both to the island and to the towns that lay near the shores of the lake.

It was Ursua's great object to induce the Canek and the high-priest, who had fled with the rest at the first panic, to return to Tayasal, and for this purpose he sent out many of the Indians with messages of friendship, and promises of pardon for all past offences. Don Martin Cán, who had proved himself a faithful adherent of the Spaniards ever since he returned to the camp, was very serviceable in these attempts to reconcile the Itzaex to the new state of things. He persuaded the chief of the important tribe of the Alains, named Chamaxculu, to join Ursua, and through the instrumentality of the latter the Canek and the high-priest were finally induced to yield obedience. On the morning of the last day of March, Chamaxculu arrived at the Great Peten, bringing with him the fugitive king and his cousin, together with their wives and children, and a numerous retinue of Indians. They were conducted into the presence of Ursua, and there made a formal submission to the King of Spain, the Canek declaring that such had always been his intention, and that it was for that purpose he had sent the crown of plumes to Merida. Ursua received the Canek and high-priest with great kindness, entertained them with music and a military *fête*, seated them at his own table, and bestowed upon them numerous presents,—doing everything, in short, to set them at ease, and appearing himself to have wholly forgotten their various acts of cruelty and treachery.

This policy had the desired effect, and the submission of the Indians now became general. Ursua made the tour of the lake in the galliot, visiting all the smaller islands and landing at various towns on the shore, where the inhabitants proffered an unqualified obedience. One

departure was however made by Ursua from the clemency which marked his general conduct, and that was in the instance of the Cacique Coboxh, whom the Canek and his cousin had accused of being the instigator of all the hostilities against the Spaniards. This cacique was made prisoner, and brought in fetters to Tayasal, where he was confronted with his accusers, and a scene of violent recrimination took place between him and the Canek, each endeavouring to fix the charge upon the other. But it came to the knowledge of Ursua, through Don Martin Cán, that, while the King and the high-priest were thus professing their devotion to the Spanish cause, they were secretly plotting their escape, with the view of exciting the Indians to an insurrection. Ursua therefore had the Canek and Quincanek, with two of their accomplices, placed in irons, preparatory to their being brought to trial. Villagutierre gives a quaint description of the condition of mind of the high-priest when he found himself "in durance vile."

"The false priest, being in league with evil spirits, and entirely in the power of the Evil One, *performed incredible feats*, and threw himself on the ground and against the walls of his prison like a madman: *he then whistled.* One of our people asked one of his female servants what that noise meant. She replied that he was calling the Demon Idols of his district to liberate him, *as they were in the habit of obeying him in everything he desired!*"

The trial began, and with something of the leaven of the Inquisition in its proceedings.

"It was impossible to make him confess, *although put to some kind of torture,* and he always denied intending to escape or having persuaded the Canek to do so, be-

cause having once surrendered and made his submission, he said he could not do or dream of anything of the kind." He likewise denied having been an accomplice or having interfered in the murders of the people from Yucatan, or of those from Guatemala: he said they had been committed by other Indians whom he named, including one of his fellow-prisoners, and that after killing they had eaten them, but that "he had not tasted a morsel." He added that the Spaniards had been beaten to death.

"Having finished this confession," continues Villagutierre, "this cursed priest, addressing himself to our people, said: 'You will see before night!' And it so happened that at sunset there arose an awful hurricane coming from the south, accompanied by tremendous thunder and lightning, and such fearful howling of the winds that the island seemed like the centre of hell; many trees were uprooted, many houses unroofed, upwards of two hundred of those that were made of wood and straw were swept entirely away, and the destruction was general. Our people in this sore affliction had recourse to God, through the intercession of His Most Holy Mother, de los Remedios, and the litany was recited before her image. The curates exorcised the storm, and about three in the morning it cleared up and the clouds vanished, after destroying half the island."

When the superstitious fear of the Spaniards was allayed, the trial proceeded. The incriminated Indian, who was a relation of the Canek, confessed everything that had happened, and declared categorically that the King himself and the priest Quincanek had opened the breasts of the friars who came from Guatemala, after they were dead, in the principal temple; that they had

killed the Spaniards who went with them into the water, and that they had carried many still alive to the Great Peten, where they had despatched and eaten them; that they had killed the friars, soldiers, and Indians in the canoes on the lake, and afterwards carried them on shore, where they devoured them also." He ended by exculpating himself and fixing the odium of these crimes on the Canek, the high-priest, and various other Indians.

Amidst these counter-accusations it was impossible to elicit the exact truth; but one fact remained tolerably certain, that the manner of death of the unfortunate Spaniards had been accurately described, and it is most likely that all the Itzaex, without distinction, were participators in the act. At an earlier period of the history of Spanish "pacification" the fate of Guatemozin and the Cacique of Tlacupa might have been that of the Canek and his companions; but a milder spirit now prevailed, and they were merely kept under sufficient restraint to prevent them from plotting against their conquerors, until the time came when they should voluntarily desire to be baptized. This happened after Ursua's return to Yucatan; but before we arrive at that event, which very shortly preceded the latest efforts of the Spaniards to pacificate the interior of the peninsula, some account must be given of the appearance of Tayasal and the customs of its inhabitants, when the General first took possession of it, as well as the steps which he took in conformity with the main objects which he had in view.

Villagutierre has devoted three several chapters to a description of the great lake, of the territories adjoining, with the religious observances and customs of the

Itzaex, the produce of their country, and other matters, which are here presented in an abridged form[1].

After speaking of the Itzaex Indians as having belonged originally to the Maya nation, Villagutierre goes on to define the limits of their territory, which he describes as much more temperate and less subject to drought than Yucatan, because there are no rivers in that province, and the supply of water is only from the wells, or those natural cavities called *Sonotes*[2].

"The mountain-ranges of the Itzaex and of the other unconverted tribes extend, he says, for more than a hundred and fifty leagues from east to west. This country is bounded on the south by the province of Vera Paz and the kingdom of Guatemala; on the north by the province of Yucatan; on the east by the sea; on the south-east by the province of Honduras; and on the west by the province of Chiapa, which extends to New Spain. These Itzaex Indians always keep the same surnames as they had in Yucatan (and to this day the people of the province use them), with this difference, that the people of Yucatan, whether sons or daughters, take only their father's surname, as is common for the most part among the Spaniards, but the Itzaex are called by the joint names of father and mother, putting the mothers first. Thus the name of their Kings or Lords, which is Canek, is the same as being called Can from the mother and Ek from the father."

Villagutierre then speaks of their idolatrous sacrifices as being similar to those already described as practised at Cozumel, adding some particulars.

"These barbarous Itzaex had an idol they called Hobo,

[1] Villagutierre, lib. iii. c. 11, 12, 13.
[2] See Appendix D.

before which, when they sacrificed any Indian man, woman, or child, they danced with such a din and noise of flutes and other instruments[1], and voices of singers appointed for these ceremonies, that it was impossible to hear the victim who was burning in the hollow metal idol; and that his or her parents or relations might feel it less, they were made to join in the dance with the rest; and the false priests persuaded them that they were fortunate and blessed to have their children and relations thus sacrificed, and that their God Hobo wished and asked for that sacrifice, that they might receive from him what they asked him for; and from that time they became people of note, and their houses and families became illustrious. They had two other idols, which they adored as Gods of battles, one called Pakoc, the other Hexchunchan; they carried these when they went to fight the Chinamitas, their neighbours and mortal foes, and when the battle was going to begin they burnt copal before them. Also, that when the Itzaex performed any feat of valour, their idols, whom they consulted, were wont to make a reply to them, and in their *Mitotes*, or dances, they used to speak to them and dance with them. This doubtless," observes the historian with amusing gravity,—"this doubtless was the cause why the Indians painted themselves so horribly when they danced the dance of that sacrifice I spoke of, *because* it was taught them by the devil; since each Indian appeared like him, and in the form *in which they must have seen him!*"

Of the Chinamitas Villagutierre tells us:—

"They had a great town of more than eight thousand

[1] *Tuncules* and *Tortugones* are mentioned: the latter must have been made of tortoise-shell.

inhabitants, which was called Tulunqui; and when Fathers Orbita and Fuensalida were in the island of the Itzaex, they were told that in that great town of Tulunqui there were some Spanish men and women captives; but it was not known how and when they had come there, nor was it known whether it was true or not. In that Indian language Tulunqui means a fortress of aloes, because it was all surrounded by a plantation of aloes. The American aloe (*Maguey*) is a tree which of itself alone yields almost everything that is produced and can be produced from all others, for from it is taken water, wine, oil, vinegar, honey, syrup, thread, needles, beams and tiles for building, and innumerable other things[1], *of which there can be no doubt; for if there were, it would not be affirmed* among other matters, by one so serious and learned, and who ought to have known so many things of the New World, as Juan de Solozano; who speaks of it in his 'Politica' in the same words, enlarging upon the strange wonders, the virtues and other properties of this and other trees of the West Indies, and their numerous uses. What I know and can say with all certainty of this tree, from all the papers that have passed through my hands on this matter, for the determination taken by the Royal Council of the Indies, is that the *maguey* is a kind of tree from which, when the shoots are cut off, a liquor like fluid honey exudes, from which a beverage called *pulque* is made; and so abundant are these trees in parts of the kingdom of New Spain, that for this year 1700, and the following years, contractors have engaged to pay His Majesty seventy-five thousand dollars for the Royal duties on this beverage of *pulque*, in the city of Mexico alone. In the year 1692, the Count

[1] This description of the Maguey is slightly overdone.

de Galve, the Viceroy, prohibited the drink, because it was said that it caused great drunkenness among the Indians, for, with the roots and other ingredients which they mixed with it to make it keep, they made it so strong that it quite maddened them, and they committed many of the vilest crimes. . . . To return to our subject; the denseness of these aloe-trees served as an enclosure and wall to Tulunqui, there being only one close and narrow entrance, surrounded by water. With these fortifications the Chinamitas defended themselves from their Itzalan enemies. . . .

"The circuit of the shores of that great lake, which is called Chaltana, is more than twenty-six leagues. Its length is much greater than its width; in some places it is fathomless, in others thirty fathoms deep, and from this and its continual waves it very much resembles the sea. It is very delightful and pleasant, and its waters are very sweet, clear, and light; here is a multitude of large, middle-sized, and small fish, very well flavoured, and good to eat; and there are also *icoteas*, fresh-water tortoises, and other similar animals. The lake has creeks and arms in all directions, numerous streams fall into it, and it is secure from pirates, as it has no outlet for its waters anywhere, unless there be a subterranean one. The Indians had innumerable canoes upon it, for on the day of the assault and capture of the Peten more than five hundred and fifty canoes were taken, merely of those that had been abandoned. In the narrowest part of this lake, at the distance of two leagues from the mainland, is the great island on which stood the capital, called Tayasal, or Taïsa. This island is very steep and lofty, with a table-land at the top; its extent is equal to that covered by the town of San Francisco de Campeche,

about three-quarters of a league. It was all covered with houses, some with stone walls to the height of about a yard, and of wood above that, with straw roofs, and others only of wood and stone. There were no streets formed, and the insides of the houses were filthy and unswept; the inhabitants lived in a brutal way, all the members of one family, however numerous, occupying the same house, whence it arose that the number of Indians in that island was very great. Within a short distance of the principal islands were four smaller ones, also covered with houses and thickly populated, and another Peten, which was uninhabited, where our men found the bones of Father Buenaventura and his companions. And the two towns and islands of the Alains are at the distance of six leagues towards the end of the lake, and there is another larger town belonging to them on the mainland. On parts of the shores of the lake there are pleasant groves of trees, and in the direction of the mountains many towns of the Coboxes and other nations, who were all under the rule of Canek, though he had his captains and governors. There is also another parallel lake, measuring five leagues round its shores, in the direction of the road to Yucatan, with another inhabited island in the midst of it; and in the direction of the plain country, at a little distance from the great lake, there is another town, which is very populous.

"The country round the lake is in some parts covered with wood, where there are herds of wild animals, such as deer and mountain-hogs, which have their navel on the back[1], and there are hares and rabbits in warrens, cocks and hens of the country, which are like turkeys and of

[1] These animals have a gland on the back, which was mistaken for the navel.

the same form, and many other birds, such as pheasants, *paaxes*, and *texones*, both of Spain and America. In the woods near the lakes there are quantities of pepper and balsam-trees, oaks, and pines of various kinds, trees yielding precious resins, and other unknown trees, some productive and some not; and in a wood about four leagues distant from the island, there are other trees which bear a kind of black cherry that is well flavoured. Eight or ten leagues from the lake, and near the road to Yucatan, begin the mountains and quarries of alabaster, which is very rich and beautiful for churches and large buildings; great part of the temples and idols which General Ursua and his men found in Tayasal were made of it. They also found idols of very precious jasper, of green, violet, red, and other colours, and of unknown metals, and a quantity of the arrows used by the Indians, with crystal heads, instead of iron or flint, and numbers of very large beads of the same material. . . . And in the mountains, about eighteen leagues distant, begin the forests of brasil-wood. *I am told by a person of great truthfulness*, that one of the conquerors of the island of Los Remedios wrote to him, saying that in the woods near the lake there is a tree with long leaves and branches, which stand up straight like palm-trees; and as General Ursua and his army were passing by with the writer of this incident, they observed that the trees there had their branches so interlaced that each tree appeared to form the most holy name of Mary. . . .

"On the other side of the lake, opposite to that of the woods, the land is all low and flat; here are large and very wide savannas (thus they call the plains under seed) extending beyond the range of the eye. The land yields two crops in the year, and the ears or heads of the grain

of maize are extremely large. The vicinity of the lake also produces fine cochineal, indigo of an excellent kind, very thick and large vanilla, cacao, achiote[1], cotton, wax, honey, sweet pine-apples, frijoles (beans), plums, sweet potatoes, all kinds of plantains, and various other vegetables. In short, all that land is very abundant in produce, the climate is healthy, and the whole territory very pleasant and delightful, and it is said that there are not, as in most parts of the Indies, snakes, lizards, alligators, bats, mosquitoes, chiguas (niguas), or other noxious and poisonous reptiles and insects. . . .

"The natives of those islands and of the vicinity of the lake are extremely sagacious and deceitful, and after they left Yucatan they became more ferocious and cruel, for the people of Yucatan did not eat human flesh; on the contrary, in ancient times they abhorred the Mexicans because they did so. But these Itzaex, after their retreat, were given to this brutality, even more than the Mexicans, for there was not a prisoner whom they took in war that they did not sacrifice and devour. And when this game failed them, they sacrificed the fattest of their boys and young men. . . . The Itzaex Indians have good countenances; they have a brown complexion inclining to be ruddy, and are cleverer than the people of Yucatan. They are agile, well made, and have handsome faces, though some of them were marked with lines as a sign of courage. They wore their hair as long as it would grow; indeed it is a most difficult thing to bring the Indians to cut their hair, for wearing it long is a sign of idolatry. . . The clothes they wore were *ayates* or *gabachos* (loose dresses without sleeves), and their

[1] A tree something like an orange-tree, from the grains of whose fruit a red paste is made for dyeing.

mantles were all of cotton woven in various colours. The women, as well as the men, wore also sashes of cotton, about four yards long and a foot wide, with which they girded themselves, and at the end of this sash many of them attached a quantity of coloured feathers, which was their greatest ornament. In their wars, and when they went to their sacrificial dances and festivals, they had their faces, arms, thighs, and legs painted and naked. The men are, for the most part, idlers and slow at work; they spend much of their time in idolatry, dancing and getting drunk at all hours. The women, on the contrary, are very notable, and apply themselves very diligently to their labours every day from sunrise to sunset, without speaking a single word: the spun work and cotton tissues of beautiful colours and shades which they manufacture are so excellent, that though the work of the Indian women of Yucatan was much esteemed from the first, and has been improved by Spanish teaching, it is far inferior to the productions of the Itzaex women. Both sexes have their ears and nostrils bored; by some, vanilla is put into the orifices, by others, small plates of very inferior gold and silver. It does not seem that they married more than one wife. Those who died a natural death were buried in the fields in the dresses they had worn; *as for those whom they killed, they buried them in their stomachs!* Nothing was found in their houses except some cotton, cochineal, indigo, achiote, wax, honey, and idols.

"Of the twenty-one Cues, or temples, which General Ursua found on the island, the largest was that in which the high-priest Quincanek officiated. It was of square form, with a handsome parapet, and was approached by nine steps, all of beautiful stone, and each front of the

building was about twenty yards long and very high. On the upper step, by the entrance, was an idol of human form with a bad countenance, sitting on his heels, and in the temple in front was another idol of unwrought emerald, which those infidels called the God of Battles: it was a span long, and remained in the possession of General Ursua. Above it was another of gypsum, with the face marked with mother-of-pearl, forming a sun and its rays; and in its mouth was inserted teeth taken from the Spaniards whom they had killed. In the midst of the temple, which was formed like a castle, there was hanging from the top, by three strips of spun cotton of different colours, a leg-bone half-decayed; and below it hung a little bag, three-quarters of a yard long, containing little pieces of bone, which were also decayed; and on the ground beneath were placed three braziers for burning perfumes or incense, with storax and other aromatic substances in them, which they used to burn in the sacrifices, and some dry maize-leaves; on the top of the upper part of this leg-bone was set a crown. It was explained that these bones were the fragments of what remained of a great horse which had been left in their care by a king who had passed that way a long time before: from which it was certain that it was the horse of Fernando Cortez. . . .

"Another great temple, built in the same way, was that of the Canek. In it was a great table or altar of stone for sacrifices, with seats all round it, highly polished. It contained also many statues of stone, wood, and gypsum, well sculptured, though some were horrible figures. In the Canek's house, too, there were several idols, a table for sacrifices, and the *Analtches*, or histories of all that happened to the people. In another temple,

which was under the care of a priest named Tut, there was a hideous idol which they said had predicted the arrival of the Spaniards, and offered his assistance in defeating them, on condition of their being sacrificed to him. But the day having come and the Spaniards having landed, and seeing his countrymen giving way, the priest Tut began in their presence to implore the aid of his false god, reminding him of his promise. But when he saw the Itzaex fly, the priest began to beat the idol, and after abusing it in very opprobrious terms, fled with the rest and threw himself into the lake."

CHAPTER XXI.

COMPLETION OF THE ROAD INTO GUATEMALA.—URSUA REQUESTS ASSISTANCE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF GUATEMALA.—DIFFICULT MARCH OF PAREDES.—URSUA COMMENCES THE FORTIFICATION OF TAYASAL, AND THEN RETURNS TO CAMPEACHY.—INTRIGUES OF SOBERANIS.—BAPTISM OF THE CANEK AND HIGH PRIEST.—URSUA'S PRESENCE REQUIRED IN TAYASAL.—HIS EFFORTS TO RETURN THWARTED BY SOBERANIS, WHO KEEPS BACK THE ROYAL CEDULAS.—URSUA IS MADE CAPTAIN-GENERAL OF THE ITZALAN TERRITORY.—OPERATIONS RESUMED FOR THE PACIFICATION OF THE PENINSULA.—URSUA AGAIN ARRIVES AT TAYASAL.—HE IS JOINED BY DON MELCHOR DE MENCOS FROM GUATEMALA.—THE CONCABÒ GENERALS.—IMPORTANT COUNCIL OF WAR.—FAILURE OF SUPPLIES.—THE LAST JUNTA HELD.—IT IS RESOLVED TO EVACUATE THE COUNTRY.—CONCLUSION.

THE first use to which General Ursua turned his capture of Tayasal, was the employment of the pacificated Indians in the completion of the Guatemala road. The Alain tribe, who were good workmen, were very serviceable in this particular, and in the course of a few days the road was constructed round the head of the lake, connecting the two lines at the points where each had stopped.

"The communication," says Villagutierre, "was now quite practicable from Yucatan to Guatemala, for carts and horses, and the lake caused not the slightest impediment; indeed, had it not been for the trees which were blown down by the hurricanes, and because the

line from the lake to Cahabon was not very clear, litters and carriages might have travelled very well upon it. Many affirmed upon oath that it was more level and less hilly than the road from Vera Cruz to Mexico, and from Mexico to Acapulco, and other places. Shortly after, couriers from Yucatan and Tabasco went and came along it to Guatemala; and artillery and everything else were carried to the Savannah of San Pedro Martyr, thence to Cahabon de la Vera Paz, and on again to Guatemala. The only objection found was, that it was much longer than necessary from the lake to the province of Vera Paz, and ought to have been made in a more direct line."

On the 23rd of March, Ursua despatched letters to the President of the Royal Audience of Guatemala, informing him of all that had occurred since he left Campeachy, representing the importance of his conquest, and demonstrating the necessity for constructing a fort to defend the Great Peten, but regretting at the same time that the exhaustion of all his means by the expenses of the expedition made it necessary for him to apply for assistance from the President for the support of the garrison. He added, that he would use his best endeavours to complete the reduction of the natives, as long as the dry weather lasted, during which time he should be able to keep the field; but as the provisions which he had brought with him would only last till May, when the wet season began, he should then be obliged to retreat while the thoroughfare was practicable, as the road was now open, and he had fulfilled his duty. He concluded by saying that he would make what further progress lay in his power, when his turn to command the provinces of Yucatan arrived, after Don Roque Soberanis's term should have expired.

This despatch was entrusted to Captain Paredes, who took with him an officer, an escort of soldiers, and a body of Indians, with provisions for twelve days, hoping to reach the first town on the way to Guatemala within that space. But the southern division of the road had been much damaged by the rains since its first construction, and Paredes and his men, a part of whom he sent back to Los Remedios, experienced great difficulty and hardship before they reached their destination. At last the journey was accomplished, and the news of which Paredes was the bearer were received with great joy in Guatemala.

The President forthwith summoned a council, to deliberate upon Ursua's request for aid: it was favourably received, and the money he wanted was ordered to be sent, for the pay and support of the troops to garrison the fortress, fifty of his own men being selected for that purpose. It was at the same time resolved that thanks should be given to General Ursua, in the name of the King, for the great service he had rendered. To this public despatch the President, the Bishop of Guatemala, and the Bishop of La Puebla de los Angeles, added private letters to the same effect.

On the receipt of this gratifying intelligence, Ursua set immediately about the construction of the fort, in the centre of the table-land on the highest point of the Great Peten, and when it was finished, and the guns mounted, he appointed Estenoz to the command, with a garrison of fifty picked men, and gave him full instructions for his guidance during his absence. All his dispositions being made, Ursua and the remainder of the troops crossed over to where the reserved force was lying, raised the camp, and marched for Campeachy,

where the army arrived in safety, and was then disbanded.

Ursua's success was gratifying to every one but the Governor Soberanis. He, when he heard of the General's return to Campeachy, immediately forwarded a petition to the Viceroy of New Spain, requesting him to give the necessary orders for Ursua, his wife and family, to leave the province of Yucatan, and withdraw to Chiapa or elsewhere. Soberanis preferred this petition on the plea that the vicinity of Ursua was against royal orders: that he might foment disturbances against his authority, and evince a desire to succeed to the Government of Yucatan before the period appointed for its relinquishment by himself, in the year 1700, had arrived. Ursua, on his part, made a fair and temperate representation to the Viceroy, setting forth all he had done, pointing out the extravagant jealousy of Soberanis, and asking permission to be allowed to remain in the southern part of the province, in order the better to carry out the wishes of the King with respect to the complete pacification of the Itzaex. Pending the Viceroy's decision, Ursua was subjected to various annoyances from his rival, but in the end an order came from Mexico appointing Campeachy as his place of residence, or, at his choice, the town of Xechelchecán, whichever might be most convenient for his purpose.

At the beginning of the year 1698, Ursua, being then at Campeachy, received a long communication from the Vicar-General of Itza, informing him of the baptism of the King, the high-priest, and others,—the former under the name of Don José Pablo Canek, and the latter under that of Don Francisco Nicolas Canek; the same letter conveyed to him many particulars respecting the

character and resources of the various tribes of Indians beyond the lake, whose subjugation had become an evident necessity. That Ursua's presence in the Great Peten was further called for, he learnt in a letter which he received shortly afterwards, by which it appeared that almost all the Indians, including Don Martin Cán, and excepting only the new converts, who were prisoners, had quitted the island, and besides the garrison in the fort, there remained no authority to control the country. The situation, for one who, like Ursua, had the pacification of Itza so earnestly at heart, was a most painful one, but, thwarted by Soberanis in everything he attempted, and almost bankrupt in means, he was wholly unable to raise either the men or money which were requisite for undertaking another expedition. What added to his vexation was being aware of the fact that Royal Cedulas had arrived, the tenour of which, he judged, was highly favourable to himself, since their publication was suppressed by Don Roque de Soberanis.

This indeed was the fact, for nothing could be more commendatory of Ursua's conduct than the letter of the King in Council, or more peremptory than the injunctions that they laid on the Governor to give him every facility for carrying out the great enterprise in which he had so long been engaged. These Cedulas were dated from Madrid, the 24th of January, 1698, and were severally addressed to Ursua, to Soberanis, to the Viceroy of New Spain, and to the President of Guatemala; but notwithstanding the urgent nature of their contents, the Governor of Yucatan kept back their publication within his own province for several months, nor was it till the

close of the year that he at last decided upon making them known to the local authorities, who, unless officially informed of the fact, could render no assistance to Ursua, but, on the contrary, were withheld from doing so.

Ursua had, in the meantime, been negotiating with the President of Guatemala about making over the Great Peten and all its dependencies to the latter, as his own resources were insufficient to provide for the support of the garrison at Tayasal, and he was anxious that, should it be necessary to abandon the place, the blame for doing so might not fall upon him. But while communications on this subject were passing between the President and Ursua, the Governor of Yucatan judged it expedient no longer to refrain from making the King's orders known, and they were publicly proclaimed in the town of Campeachy. An important feature of the Cedula addressed to Ursua, was a paragraph conferring upon him the jurisdiction of the Governor and Captain-General of the whole country through which he had constructed the road, dependent only on the Viceroy of New Spain; and to this order Soberanis found himself obliged to give effect, by stating that in his new capacity Ursua was "to be allowed in every place under his command to use forthwith the bâton and insignia of Governor and Captain-General, and to appoint and take with him one or more aides-de-camp." Ursua was now invested with a more independent authority than he had ever before enjoyed, and he was not slow to profit by his opportunity. The military Governor of Campeachy, Don Juan Geronimo de Obad, offered him all the assistance in his power, and Ursua at once entered into an engagement with him, by which he pro-

mised, "out of his own pocket[1]," to pay for all that was necessary for the campaign!

This event closed the year 1698, and at the beginning of January, 1699, operations were commenced in the hope of finally pacificating the interior of the peninsula, not only on the side of Yucatan, but on that of Guatemala also. For this purpose the President of the latter province got together a force of two hundred men-at-arms in two divisions, one of which was to enter Itza through the town of Dolores, and the other direct from Vera Paz, the commander-in-chief of the whole being Don Melchor Mencos. A large commissariat, a medical staff, and several missionaries, with supplies of all kinds of necessary tools and toys for the Indians, added to the efficiency of the expedition.

About the same time Ursua set out from Campeachy, but in different guise. He was accompanied only by his own servants and a few volunteers, and took the road to Zucthoc. At Bateab he encountered a courier sent to him with letters from the President of Guatemala, informing him of the departure of the troops that he had collected, and he accordingly made the best of his way to the great lake of Itza. The garrison, who were prepared for his arrival, received him on its borders with great rejoicing, and welcomed him with a military salute; he embarked on board the galliot, and landed on the island of Los Remedios on the 11th of February, 1699. He found the garrison greatly straitened for the want of provisions and military stores, the supply of the former from Guatemala having been very scanty, and that of the latter altogether wanting, and he looked for-

[1] "Pagándolo todo Don Martin Ursua de su proprio caudal."—Villagutierre, lib. ix. cap. ix. p. 590.

ward to the arrival of the army of Don Melchor Mencos with much anxiety. A fortnight however elapsed, and there being no signs of the expedition, Ursua sent out some Spanish soldiers in search of it, with letters to Mencos, praying him to hasten his approach, and intimating that he placed himself under his orders.

These messengers fell in with the Guatemalian force on the Savannah of San Pedro Martyr, where Mencos had pitched his camp on the preceding day, the 3rd of March. He returned for answer that he would advance on Los Remedios as speedily as possible, and finally made his entry to Tayasal on the 14th. "The war of politeness," as Villagutierre not unaptly calls it, which took place at the interview between the two generals, was something perfectly ludicrous. Neither Mencos nor Ursua would assume the supreme direction, each professing his desire to serve as a private soldier under the orders of the other, and two or three days were actually consumed in these *pourparlers* before they could come to an understanding. It was at last agreed that they should share the power between them, with the title of "Concabo," or "co-operating generals."

This power appeared, after all, to be of no great value, for, owing to the accidents which had delayed the march of Mencos and the want of his commissariat, which, through the misconduct of the Commissary Avalos, had been suffered to linger far in the rear, with the loss of most of the requisite materials for the campaign, the season for commencing active operations was fast going by without the opportunity of turning it to account, provisions, ammunition, and implements of labour being all wanting. A council of war was therefore held under a junta of officers, formed to determine what should im-

mediately be done. The questions which were brought before the Junta were various: the principal related to the site on which a new town, ordered to be built by the Royal Cedula of 1698, was to be raised, and to the subsequent course of proceedings. It was decided that the town, with a fortress to protect it, should be laid out on the borders of the lake, on the south side, from whence all future operations were to be directed for subjugating the numerous tribes of Indians occupying the immense tract of country between the lake and the inhabited part of Guatemala; that a garrison of eighty men should be established, partly for the defence and partly for the escort of missionaries; that a new and more direct line of road to the south should be constructed, and that a certain number of Indians should be constantly employed in the cultivation of maize near the town, in order that a scarcity of provisions might not occur.

Mention has hitherto been made of that division only of the army of Guatemala, which was under the immediate command of Don Melchor Mencos. They were still waiting at Tayasal for news of the other division, which had taken the route of Los Dolores, and a party was sent out in that direction to await their arrival in the vicinity of that place and escort them to Los Remedios. After several days' expectation, the missing division came in sight near a place called Chachan; the delay had been occasioned by the troops having lost their way in a wide savannah, where they wandered about for twelve days before they found the track that led to the Rio de Los Dolores. They reached the Great Peten on the 1st of April, and having now with him all the forces that had been placed at his disposal, with the exception

of those under the Commissary Avalos, Ursua sent out parties in various directions to reconnoitre the country in the neighbourhood of the great lake; and wherever Indians were found, the commanders were instructed to employ the gentlest means to induce them to return to the allegiance to the King of Spain promised in their name to the Canek, and to receive baptism at the hands of the missionaries.

The result of these military expeditions was, on the whole, unsatisfactory, for though in some instances the Indians proved obedient, and showed their usual readiness to accept the laws and religion of their "pacificators," in others they displayed open and armed resistance, evacuating their towns and burning the maize-plantations. At last, in consequence of the discouraging nature of the reports, the general want of provisions, and the sickness which began to spread amongst the troops in the garrison and camp, it was resolved by the Concabó Generals to call in all the parties, and convoke another Junta, to discuss the state of affairs.

The Generals then entered into an *exposé* of what had been done, which chiefly consisted in the reduction, though not in the occupation, of the towns of Nochicha (which was burnt), Ixtal, and Chatha; but they considered that the inhabitants of these places would nevertheless soon settle down into a state of tranquillity, if the Canek, the high-priest, and the other Indian prisoner, their relative, were removed to Guatemala, whither they thought it expedient that the army should return. The Junta coincided in the views of Ursua and his colleague, and it was unanimously resolved that the troops should withdraw to Guatemala, taking the three prisoners with them, but leaving a sufficient garrison in

the Great Peten, with all the ammunition, accoutrements, and provisions that could be spared.

It was with deep regret that General Ursua saw himself compelled to adopt this course, and thus put an end to a campaign which had promised so well in the outset, but which, from neglect, mismanagement, and misfortune, had ended so badly. He laid the chief blame of the failure on Don Gabriel de Berospe, the President of Guatemala, who had neglected to furnish the promised supplies, without which it was impossible so large a force as that under his command could subsist in a hostile country.

The retreat having been determined on, Ursua was desirous, as the sickness continued to increase, to carry it into effect as speedily as possible. Some opposition to his wish was offered by Mencos, who, for various reasons advocated delay, but the question was finally carried as Ursua had proposed. Captain Francisco Cortes was appointed Commander of the Fort and Chief Justice of the towns and provinces of Itza, and remained at Los Remedios, with a force of seventy men and officers, besides missionaries and private families, while the remainder returned with General Mencos to Guatemala.

The evacuation took place on the 11th of May, 1699, and on the same day General Ursua set out with his suite for Yucatan. He had not long arrived at Campeachy when intelligence reached him from Merida, of the death of Don Roque de Soberanis, and of his accession to the government of the province.

Here the narrative of the Licentiate Villagutierre, as a record of the "Conquest of Itza," the only one extant, is suddenly brought to a close. "I am now compelled," he says, "to bring to a conclusion this first part

of my history, as I cannot depend upon any further intelligence received from these provinces." But he promised, if life and health were granted to him, and provided he obtained the necessary materials for the work, to bring to light a second part, and even more. The volume from which the greater part of the information respecting the people of Itza has been derived was published in Madrid, in January, 1701, within two years of the latest events recorded. It is therefore not impossible that the worthy but prolix historian did not live to fulfil his intentions, and unfortunately he left his mantle to no successor, the interrupted narrative having never been resumed.

What further incidents consequently befell in completing the pacification of the interior of Yucatan, must remain matter for speculation. That the country of the Itzaex was never completely subjugated, may be safely inferred from the fact that the Indians who occupy the Great Peten, to which they have given the name of Flores, though nominally subject to Guatemala, are still, in reality, an independent race[1]. Their warlike propensities however have yielded to the desire of commercial intercourse with their neighbours, and a small trade is carried on by them, on one side with Tabasco, by way of the river San Pedro, and on the other with the Settlement of British Honduras. But with respect to their actual condition, our present information falls short of what was known by the Spaniards at the close of the seventeenth century.

[1] See Appendix E.

APPENDIX.

A. (p. 16.)

GOMARA.

La diligencia y gasto que hizo Cortes en armar la flota y los estornos que en ello tuvo.—CAPITULO VII.

COMO tardava Joan de Grijalva mas que tardo Fracisco Hernãdez a bolver: o embiar aviso de lo que hazia: despacho Diego Velasquez a Christoval de Olid en una caravela en socorro y a saber del: encargandole q̃ tornasse luego con cartas de Grijalva. Empero el Christoval de Olid anduvo poco por Yucatan: sin hallar a Joan de Grijalva se bolvio a Cuba: que fue un gran daño para Diego Velasquez: y para Grijalva. Porque si fuera a San Joã d' Ulhua o mas adelãte: hiziera por vẽtura a poblar alli a Grijalva. Mas dixo: que le convino dar la buelta por aver perdido las ancoras. Llego Pedro de Alvaredo despues de partido Christoval de Olid: con la relacion del descubrimiẽto. Y con muchas cosas de oro: pluma: y algodon: que se avian rescatado. Con las quales: y con lo q̃ dixo de palabra: se holgo y maravillo Diego Velasquez cõ todos los Españoles de Cuba. Mas temio la buelta de Grijalva: porque le dezian los enfermos que de alla vinieron como no tenian gana de poblar. Y que la tierra y gente era mucha y guerrera. Y aun porque desconfiava de la prudencia: y animo de su pariente. Assi que determino embiar alla algunas naos con gente y armas: y mucha quinquilleria: pensando enriquezer por rescates y poblar por fuerça. Rogo a Baltasar

Vermudez que fuesse. Y como le pidio tres mil ducados para yr bien armado y proveido: dexóle: diziendo: que seria mas el gasto de aquella manera: que no el provecho. Tenia poco estomago para gastar: siẽdo codicioso. Y queria embiar armada a costa agena: que assi avia hecho casi la de Grijalva: porque Francisco d' Montejo puso un navio y mucho bastimento. Y Alonso Hernandez Portocarrero: Alõso de Avila: Diego de Ordas: y otros muchos fueron a su costa con Joan de Grijalva. Hablo a Fernando Cortes para que armassen ambos a medias: porque tenian dos mil castellanos d' oro en cõpañia d' Andres d' Duero mercader. Y porq̃ era hõbre diligẽte discreto: y esforçado. Rogo le que fuesse con la flota: encareciendo el viaje: y negocio. Fernãdo Cortes: que tenia grande animo y desseos: acepto la compañia y el gasto: y la yda: creyendo que no seria mucha la costa. Assi que se concertaron presto. Embiaron a Joan de Sanzedo: que havia venido con Alvarado: a sacar una licencia de los frayles Jeronimos que governavan entonces: de poder yr a rescatar para los gastos. Y a buscar a Joan de Grijalva: que sin ella no podia nadie rescatar: que es feriar merceria por oro y plata. Fray Luis de Figuerroa: fray Alonso de Santo Domingo: y fray Bernaldino Mançanedo: que eran los governadores: dieron la licencia para Fernãdo Cortes como capitã y armador con Diego Velasquez: mandando que fuessen con el un tesorero y un veedor: para procurar y tener el quinto del rey: como era de costumbre. Entretanto que venia la licẽcia de los governadores: començo Fernando Cortes de adereçarse para la jornada: Hablo a sus amigos y a otros muchos: para ver si querrian yr con el. Y como hallo trezientos que fuessen: compro una caravela y un vergantin: para con la caravela que traxo Pedro de Alvarado: y otro vergantin de Diego Velasquez: y proveyo los de armas: artilleria: y municiõ. Compro vino: azeyte: havas: garvanços: y otros cosillas. Tomo fiada de Diego Sanz tendero: una tienda de bohoveria en setecientos pesos de oro. Diego Velasq̃z le dio mil castellanos de la hazienda de Panfilo de Narvaez: que tenia en poder por su ausencia: diziendo que no tenia blanca suya. Y

dio a muchas soldados: que yvan en la flota dineros con obligacion de manconum o fianças. Y capitularon ambos lo que cada uno havia de hazer: ante Alonso de Escalante escrivano publico y real: a veynte y tres dias de Otubre del año de deziocho.

Bolvio a Cuba Joan de Grijalva en aquella mesma sazon. Y uvo con su venida mudança en Diego Velasquez. Ca ni quiso gastar mas en la flota que armava Cortes. Riquisiera que la acabara de armar. Las causas porque lo hizo fueron: querer embiar por si a solas aquellas mesmas naos de Grijalva. Ver el gasto de Cortes y el animo con que gastava. Pensar que se alçaria: como avia el hecho al almirante don Diego. Oyr y creer a Vermudez y a los Velasquez: que le dezian no fiasse del: què el tremeño: mañoso: altivo: amador de honras: y hõbre que se vengaria en aquello de lo passado. El Vermudez estava muy arrepentido: por no aver tomado aquella empresa quando le rogaron: sabiendo entonces el grande y hermoso rescate que Grijalva traya. Y quan rica tierra era: la nuevamente descubierta. Los Velasquez quisierã como parientes: ser los capitanes y cabeçal de la armada. Aun que no eran para ello: segun dizen. Penso tambiẽ Diego Velasquez: que afloxando: el cesaria Cortes. Y como procedia en el negocio: echole a Amador de Larez persona muy principal: para que dexasse la yda pues Grijalva era buelto: y que pagarian lo gastado. Cortes: entendiendo los pẽsamiẽtos del Diego Velasquez: dixo a Larez: que no dexaria de yr si quiera por la verguença. Ni apartaria compania. Y si Diego Velasquez queria embiar a otro: armando por si: que lo hiziesse. Ca el ya tenia licẽcia de los padres governadores. Y assi hablo con sus amigos y personas principales: que se aparejavan para la jornada: aver si le siguirian y favorecerian. Y como sintiesse toda amistad y ayuda en ellos: començo a buscar dineros. Y tomo fiados quatro mil pesos de oro de Andres de Duero: Pedro de Xerez: Antonio de Santa Clara: mercaderes y de otros. Con los quales compro dos naos: seys cavallos: y muchos vestidos. Socorrio a muchos: tomo casa: hizo mesa. Y començo yr con armas: y

mucha compañia. De que muchos murmuravan: diziendo que tenia estado sin señorio. Llego en esto a Santiago Joan de Grijalva. Y no le quiso ver Diego Velasquez: porque se vino de aquella rica tierra y pesavale que Cortes fuesse alla: tan pusãte. Mas no le pudo estorvar la yda: porque todos le siguian: los que alli estavan: como los que venian con Grijalva. Ca si lo tentara con rigor: uviera rebuelta en la ciudad: y aun muertes. Y como no era parte: dissimulo. Toda via mando: que no le diessen vituallas: segũ muchos dizẽ. Cortes procuro de salir luego de alli. Publico que yva por si: pues era buelto Grijalva: diziẽdo a los soldados: que no havian de tener que hazer con Diego Velasquez. Dixoles que se embarcassen con la comida que pudiessen. Tomo a Fernando Alfonso: los puercos: y carneros: que tenia para pesar otro dia en la carneceria: dandole una cadena de oro: hechura de abrosos: en pago. Y para la pena de no dar carne en la ciudad. Y partiose de Santiago d' Barucoa a deziocho de Noviembre con mas de trezientos Españoles en seys navios."

B. (p. 20.)

The following is the text of Oviedo:—

"E el miércoles adelante, veynte é nueve del mes, dia del Arcangel Sanct Miguel, por la mañana paresçió la tierra de la isla Fernandina, é vieron una parte de la que se diçe el Marien, é otro dia siguiente llegaron á estar enfrente del puerto de Carenas, y çerca de la tierra, é por saber el general si avia llegado en salvamento el capitan Alvarado que él avia enviado delante, segund tengo ya dicho, salió en tierra con pocos, é entró en una estançia de unos veçinos de la villa de Sanct Chripstóbal, é halló alli quien le dixo quel navío de Alvarado avia alli llegado en salvamento, aunque con harto trabaxo. Y estuvo essa noche en tierra Grijalva, é otro dia luego se quiso tornar á los navíos; pero no los vido y penssó que

avian decaydo con las corrientes, é assi por esto se entró en su barca él y los que con él avien salido, é anduvo todo el dia é la noche siguiente hasta otro dia por la mañana por la costa, que fué Sábado dos dias de otubre que llegó, delante del puerto de Xaruco, á una estançia de Diego Velasquez; é salido alli preguntó si avian visto los navíos, é dixéronle que no: é á hora de las diez del dia paresçieron enfrente del puerto que llaman de Chipiona, que es en la dicha estançia donde el capitan Grijalva avia llegado, como es dicho. Y desde alli se entró en los navíos, y cómo el tiempo era contrario, no les dexó tomar el puerto de Matança, é assi andovieron dando bordos á un cabo y á otro hasta el lunes siguiente, quatro dias de Octubre, que porque la gente yba muy fatigada, mandó el capitan que tomassen el puerto de Xaruco: é assi entraron en él la tarde á puesta del sol, y el diá siguiente se desembarcó todo la gente en tierra, y cada uno se fué por su parte, exçepto algunos pocos que quedaron y se fueron con el capitan en el navío menor de todos, dicho Sancta Maria de los Remedios, hasta el puerto que llaman de Chipiona. É desde alli fueron al que llaman de la Matança, donde allegó a los ocho del mes, é el Sábado adelante llegarón alli los otros navíos, é hallaron alli al capitan Chripstóbal de Olit, al qual el teniente Diego Velasquez avie enviado con un navío que ahy tenia con gente armada, é artilleria, é bastimentos, en busca del armada del capitan Grijalva. El qual dixo que avia allegado á la isla de Coçumel, é que avia tomado la posession de la isla penssando que estaba por descobrir, é que desde ella avia ydo costeando la tierra de Yucatan por la vanda del Norte, é avia llegado á un puerto que se haçia delante en un boca que se haçe al cabo de la tierra, y segund los pilotos de la armada deçian, debia de ser un puerto que está entre la misma Yucatan y Puerto Desscado: é que cómo no avia hallado rastro ni memoria del armada, que assi por esto, como porque avia perdido las áncoras é no tenia buenas amarras ó cables, se avia tornado á la isla Fernandina, é avia allegado á aquel puerto de Metanças ocho dias avie.

"Estando alli el capitan Grijalva adereçando su partida é

haçiendo meter bastimentos en los navíos, para yrse á la cibdad de Sanctiago, donde estaba el teniente Diego Velasquez, le dieron una carta suya en la qual mandabä que lo mas pronto quél pudiesse le enviasse los navíos, y dixesse á la gente que por quel aderesçaba á grande priessa para enviar á aquella tierra que se avia descubierto, que todos los que quisiessen yr allá á poblar se esperassen alli hasta que él enviasse los navíos (que seria muy presto), y que de sus haçiendas de Diego Velasquez les seria dado lo que oviesse menester; y assi lo envió á proveer é mandar que se es diesse á todos los que esto quissiessen atender, y escubró a los alcaldes y regimiento de aquella villa de Sanct Chripstóbal que les hiçiessen todo buen tractamiento. É assi algunos se quedaron alli, esperando la vuelta de los navíos, para yr á poblar la Isla Rica, que es la tierra de Yucatan (é no isla, como entonçes se pensaba): otros algunos se fueron á sus casas con penssamiento de volver, quando fuesse tiempo. É luego fueron los navíos é capitanes con el general Johan de Grijalva á la cibdad de Santiago é hiçiéronse á la vela viernes en la noche, veynte é dos dias de Octubre de aquel año de mill é quinientos é diez é ocho, los tres navíos, é con ellos assi mismo el capitan Chripstóbal de Olit con el otro navío que se dixo: é hizoles muy contrarios tiempos, é assi tardaron algunos dias hasta llegar á Sanctiago, donde hallaron al teniente Diego Velasquez, al qual se le dió relaçion de todo lo que se ha dicto que subçedió en este descubrimiento é camino que por su mandado hizo el capitan Johan de Grijalva."

C. (p. 23.)

This passage, as well as its antecedent, has been already cited in Appendix A, but both are repeated here to show how the mistake of M. Fumée occurred. Gomara says, speaking of the agreement which was entered into between Velasquez and Cortes before the royal notary Alonso de Escalante:—

"Y capitularon ambos lo que cada uno avia de hazer: ante Alonso de Escalante escrivano publico y real: a veynte y tres dias de Otubre del año de deziocho."

Here ends the first sentence; what follows is the commencement of a new one:—

"Bolvio a Cuba en aquella mesma sazon. Y uvo con su venida mudança en Diego Velasquez."

The mistake made by Fumée is that of not observing the punctuation, and paraphrasing the original text as follows:—

"Durant tels préparatifs le 23 Octobre, 1518, Jean de Grijalva arriva à l'Isle de Cuba, qui fut cause que le gouverneur commença à changer d'avis, et deslors ne voulut plus fraier aux frais des vaisseaux que Cortés faisoit armer, et eust bien voulu que Cortés mesme eust délaissé ceste entreprinse, se proposant alors d'y envoyer seulement à ses propres despens avecques les mesmes vaisseaux que son nepveu Grijalva avoit amenez, craignant que si Cortés y alloit, il se revoltast comme lui mesme avoit faict contre l'Amiral Dom Diego."—*Histoire Générale des Indes*, livre ii. folio 67 *verso*.

D. (p. 307.)

Mr. Norman, in his 'Rambles in Yucatan,' (Philadelphia, 1849,) gives the following description of one of these *Sonotes* at Valladolid:—"During my walks about the city I came to a sonato (*sonote*), reputed to be the largest in the province, and supposed to be a portion of a subterraneous river; and caused, as I judged, by some great convulsion of nature. It presents a fine spectacle, resembling the mouth of a cavern, with its overhanging rocks and broken fragments left or worn away into the shape of inverted cones. Evidently, it was once hidden; and when or how it effected an opening, no one hereabouts can tell. All that the Indian knows is, that it affords him an abundant and good supply of water. The average depth of the water is twelve fathoms; while the distance from

its surface to the surface of the ground above, is full fifty feet. The well itself has no perceptible outlet, and is about fifty feet in circumference. The surrounding rocks are principally calcareous, with a siliceous intermixture. These sonatos (*sonotes*) are held in superstitious reverence by the Indians. They are reputed to be the places where most of their religious legends had their origin."

Mr. Norman mentions another *Sonote* in the town of Tabi, of which the Bachelor Valencia, in his '*Relacion de los Beneficios*,' speaks in these words: "At midday, when the rays of the sun are perpendicular, appears in the centre of the Zonóte a most beautiful palm-tree, which I have seen many times in the company of divers Spaniards, natives of the city of Merida, who have gone purposely to see it at that hour."—("Al medio dia, quando los rayos del Sol le hiesen de lleno, se parece en la mitad dal Zonóte una Palma vistosissima, la qual he visto yo muchas vezes en compañia de diversos Españoles, vezinos de la ciudad de Merida, que al proposito han gustado de verla á la hora dicha.")

Respecting the *Sonotes*, Cogolludo says:—"The whole country of Yucatan is of an equally high temperature, cold being felt at no season of the year. From October till March the *Norths* which blow refresh the coasts, but where their influence is not experienced the heat is felt without any exercise. It is a moist country and very fertile, and there are no rivers save in the interior. In many parts there are numerous crecks, some large, others small, opening naturally through the live rock ten or twelve fathoms or more down to the water and as much below it. There are large tanks also, filled with fresh water, and containing quantities of fish. It is believed that these are subterranean streams, and the water of them is purer and better than that in the pits which are dry."—*Historia de Yucathan*, p. 172.

In another place he tells us that "near the town of Tikóh, between the south and the north, which the Indians call Iká, is another *Zonót*, into which if any one enters without holding his breath he dies instantly; therefore none are desirous

of bathing in it. In breathing or making any other noise (*ruydo*) they say the commotion of the water is excessive, and that the noise poisons the water (*yerve prestissimamente*), and that it has caused the deaths of many Indians, strangers to that place, who, not aware of the properties of the *Zonót*, have gone to draw water from thence." Cogolludo adds that this statement was certified to him by the Indians as a fact, "on the day of the Apostle St. Peter, in the year 1655, in the presence of their religious teacher, who told me also it was a thing held to be true."

Cogolludo speaks also of other wells to which singular properties belong. "In the town of Chunhuhú, on the road to Bakhalál, is a well, the waters of which will boil any meat." . . . "On the eastern coast is a spring of water which has this strange property, that if you drink of it silently it is clear and good, but if you speak in doing so, it becomes brackish, bitter, and turbid. The place is called by the Indians 'Hichi.'"

E. (p. 328.)

"There is a district of country situated between Guatemala, Yucatan, and Chiapas, that has never yet been subdued. This section is surrounded by mountains, and is said to be inaccessible, except by one way, and that not generally known. No one yet, who has had the boldness to follow the inhabitants to their wild retreat, has ever returned to render an account of their journey. The inhabitants are represented as speaking the Maya and Tchole languages, and many of them as conversing well in Spanish. From the latter circumstance, they are enabled to visit the nearest cities, sell their tobacco, the principal article they cultivate, and afterwards return to their retreats. They are constituted of the Lacandons and other savage tribes; are expert warriors, remarkably athletic, and

very cruel. They are worshipers of idols, and their religious ceremonies are said to have undergone little or no change."—*Norman's Rambles in Yucatan.*

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE CLIMATE AND PRODUCE OF ITZA.

In chapter xii. of the tenth book of Villagutierre's 'Historia de la Conquista de el Itza,' the following details are given of the general character of the country, in justification of Ursua's design of effecting a settlement there.

He says: "As some persons doubted Don Martin Ursua's statement in reference to the quality of the soil of this country, and to the importance of the lake and islands of the Itzaex, as also that their conquest and reduction would produce the advantages promised, and as so many unprejudiced persons, who had seen and examined it, were now assembled to remove these doubts, he, conjointly with the other general, decreed that all the officers, missionaries, and other persons of experience, should give their opinion in writing as to whether the climate and water of the country were good, and whether there were abundance or scarcity of fish in the lakes and rivers; if the lands were good for farming as well as for breeding cattle, if they were sterile or fertile, how many crops a year they would give according to the best of their judgment; whether, from the maize-plantations, farms, towns, and roads they had seen, they considered the numbers of Indians large or small; and whether from the annexation of these provinces the Crown would lose or gain, or whether the commerce of the vassals would receive any benefit therefrom; also whether it would be advantageous to build towns on the parts they had seen, and between that and Yucatan.

"The opinions given were generally to the effect that the climate was good, the air exceedingly pure, the waters very

wholesome, and the lakes and rivers full of good fish of all sizes, such as icoteas, turtles, and others; the temperature was mild, and the savannahs and mountains full of deer, boars, turkeys, pheasants, and many other birds and animals. The proof of the healthiness of the climate was that only one soldier from Campeachy had died of the many who had accompanied Don Martin Ursua in both his journeys, and not one of the many Indians who had carried the provisions.

"That the country was very extensive, and that it would be very advantageous for the Spaniards to settle in it; that there could be no doubt that when once the towns were built, the roads mended, and the traffic commenced between the provinces, the country of Itza would become one of the richest imaginable, because the immense savannahs were capable of supplying every kind of cattle, and the valleys in the mountains produced tobacco, cacao, cochineal, achiote, indigo, and many other things, the Indians having a small quantity of each in their maize-plantations.

"The land moreover was so fertile, that the Indians said that a maize-plantation would give fruit to the grandchildren of the man who planted it, at the rate of two crops a year; and in the mountains were to be found valuable aromatic and medicinal shrubs, likewise wood for all purposes of building, and quarries of alabaster on the road to Campeachy, at about the distance of eight leagues from the great lake. That no idea could be formed of the multitude of Indians that were in the surrounding country, without counting the seventeen nations which, King Canek, his high-priest, and others asserted, inhabited the eastern side, and many others on the Yucatan side, most of which had been pacificated, but now had retired to the mountains. That it would be very advantageous to people the country; that great benefits would redound therefrom to His Majesty, the merchants, and inhabitants of the whole kingdom and provinces of Guatemala, especially in the commerce of cheap goods, as, when once the roads were repaired, it would have the port of Campeachy, which was enclosed and fortified for a warehouse and general depôt. If it

were to be peopled in a proportionate ratio to the Indians it contained, it might be divided into many provinces: and as, by the taking of the island from the infidels, they could no longer commit the atrocities they were wont to do, it would be very advantageous to build a town on the site which had been chosen on the borders of the lake towards the south, and thereby continue the reduction of the infidels, and people the other towns, and build wherever it would be suitable, for the natives were very ingenious, and could turn their hands to whatever they chose; their buildings, cutting, and statues were very neat, and worthy of admiration.

"Their houses had very wide sills of stone and mortar, well polished, and wood-cuttings; they had books made of shells or bark of trees, the leaves of betun, containing their prophecies; these were in possession of General Ursua ever since he had taken the island. Once permanently reduced and christianized, they would become docile, obey the Government, and become instructed; then they would contribute to the preservation of the conquest and to the formation and prosperity of the towns, villages, and stations which might be built in the country."

THE END.

JOHN EDWARD TAYLOR, PRINTER,
LITTLE QUEEN STREET, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS.

YUCATAN
and the
ADJACENT TERRITORIES
Dudley Costello Esqr
1850
MEXICO
GULF
PACIFIC OCEAN
HIBUERAS or HONDURAS
CUBA
VERA PAZ
Country of the CHOLES
Country of the MASEGUES
Country of the ITZAES or MAYA INDIANS
Country of the QUICHES
Country of the ZENDALES
Country of the ACHIES
Country of the TZENDALS and QUELENIENCES
Country of the CHOLES
Country of the MASEGUES
Country of the ZENDALES
Country of the QUICHES
Country of the ACHIES
Country of the TZENDALS and QUELENIENCES
Country of the ITZAES or MAYA INDIANS
Ancient Settlements of EL PEREGRINO
LACANDON Country
LACANDON Country
Cruzados 1518
Cortes 1519
Cruzados May 11 1519
Cortes Feb 1519
Montejo 1541
Bay of Ascension
Cruzados May 11 1519
Cortes Nov 1524
Cortes 1524
Cortes 1525
Montejo 1541
Montejo 1542
Montejo 1543
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